Chapter 3: Evaluation of available ethical approaches

The aim of this chapter is to take a critical look at various approaches to dealing with different moral perspectives. I will identify three broad perspectives on dealing with the problem of a lack of moral consensus, and indicate how a fourth and fifth might be considered as combination of some of the other approaches. The first approach aims at attaining the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. The second approach searches for common values and attempts to commit individuals to those things that they have in common, and which make them a unique group or community. The third perspective argues that one can universalize the moral sphere by appealing to objective reasoning which brings all individuals to certain basic conclusions. The latter two approaches are combined in the fourth approach, the emphasis being put on finding certain universal values that transcend differences and can sometimes even fuse different communities into a coherent universal whole, such as John Hick's and Hans Küng's global projects. A common universal structure of what constitutes the good is identified whilst under-emphasizing, rationalizing and reasoning away those aspects that the various groups do not agree on according to some just procedure. Finally, the Integrative Social Contracts Theory's (ISCT) attempt at bringing certain strands of these approaches together in a comprehensive strategy for dealing with morality in the workplace will be evaluated. In the course of this chapter it will become clear that all these approaches rest on certain problematic assumptions and ideals. They do not only ignore particularity and difference in the way in which it had been defined in Chapter 2, but also provides us with little help when it comes to dealing with moral dissensus in pluralist working environments.

Van der Ven's depiction of morality as the search for the good, the just and the wise can be used to analyze the various approaches available to us and to indicate the problems these approaches have from the perspective of the needs of pluralist working environments. The first two approaches discussed will both be examples of teleological thinking, which tries to determine good ends that should be aimed for. Habermas suggests that the substantive approaches within moral thinking may be understood as teleological ones, since they contain a vision or a set of visions concerning the good life, which is to be strived for and acted on

(Van der Ven 1998:138). The third approach will be deontological in nature, attempting to define the just procedure to be used in order to reach moral guidelines. The fourth represents an attempt to achieve a synthesis in the search for the good and the just, by aiming for a universal consensus with regard to common goods and just practices. The ISCT theory attempts yet another form of synthesis, one that provides us with a substantive approach of hypernorms and suggests certain corresponding procedural parameters. Whether the ISCT theory equips us to make *wise* moral judgments in all respects is however questionable, because of some of its core assumptions.

In the course of the argument developed here, it will become clear that procedural rationality always implies substantive rationality and vice versa. When one is describing how one should reason in determining what is good or just, one is already making certain substantive assumptions as to what should be considered good or just. This is illustrated in the fact that Habermas describes utilitarianism as a procedural approach. As Van der Ven (1998:137) says: *"Habermas distinguishes between two main types, substantive and procedural and divides procedural into utilitarian subtypes on the one hand and deontological subtypes on the other"*. I would describe utilitarianism as both a search for maximizing certain goods and therefore having to indicate the priority of certain goods above others, whilst at the same time trying to indicate a just procedure for reaching those goals. The distinction between substantive and procedural approaches might therefore be functional in describing the various aspects of a certain approach, but not in distinguishing one approach from another. This point will be further illustrated as the chapter progresses.

3.1. The first search for the good: The best possible consequences for the largest number of people

Consequentialism can be divided into ethical egoism and utilitarianism. Egoism is the belief that one ought to bring about the greatest good for oneself. In terms of the definition of what constitutes "moral" conduct given in chapter 2 of this dissertation, conduct that only take self-interest into account when making decisions on what constitutes the correct or ethical behavior cannot be considered "moral". Egoism is therefore seen in this dissertation

as an immoral form of decision-making. Utilitarianism is the approach that argues that one ought to act to bring about the greatest good for the largest number of people. According to Hoffman (1995:24) utilitarianism, in its traditional form, does not permit an individual to give priority to his/ her self-interest. Rather, the interests of all persons affected by an individual's action are given the same weight. The ideal is to treat everyone alike in the sense that the interests of all involved are brought into play when making a moral decision. In determining the interests of everyone, which are supposed to be pursued, one should seek pleasure and avoid pain. It is also assumed that the pleasures and pains of any one person are similar to those of another person and that the duration and intensity of pleasures and pains can be quantified and measured. Finally, utilitarians also assume that individuals are able to canvass the acts available to them and to make reliable judgments about the amount of pleasure and pain caused to all involved by the decision that is made in that particular instance.

One of the main proponents of the utilitarian theory is Jeremy Bentham. He argues that it is possible to take the balance of pleasure and pain for each individual affected by a certain act and add it all up in order to establish a ranking of acts in terms of how much total pleasure or pain they cause. The act that is ranked top of the list, that is the one that causes the most pleasure and the least pain, would then be considered the morally best act. Even though it may seem very reasonable to judge the morality of an act by trying to maximize the good for the greatest number of people, utilitarianism does make certain problematic assumptions. In the first place it assumes that it is possible to calculate pleasure and pain and rank it on a scale. But can all pleasures and pains be compared to one another, or would it in some cases be like comparing apples and pears to one another? Furthermore, can the pleasures and pains of one individual be compared with those of another? As Hoffman (1995:26) indicates, utilitarianism assumes the possibility of making certain calculations that cannot be made. Another utilitarian John Stuart Mill attempted to address these problems by distinguishing different kinds of pleasures that people experience. Some pleasures, so argued Mill, are qualitatively better than some others; for instance, intellectual pleasures are better than the pleasure one gets from food. He proposed that "competent judges" who had experience of various kinds of pleasures would

be able to establish a hierarchy of different kinds of pleasures. But the question arises: Who is considered to be a "competent" judge? There is no way in which one could set up an "objective" criterion as to what constitute good ends for everyone involved in order to establish an objective measure that can be used to calculate utility.

Another issue that comes into play is how one decides to distribute the pleasures and pains that are the end result of some action to all the affected parties. How does one, for instance, adjudicate what type of pain and what amount of pain can or may be suffered by a certain group of people in order to maximize the pleasures of some other group? Hoffman (1995:27) cites the example of the problems that arise if utility is maximized in the United States by ensuring than an ethnic minority gets all the pain while the white majority gets all the pleasure. The fact that it is unfair is not prohibited by this type of hedonistic utilitarianism. In South Africa this principle of utility was used to discriminate against the black majority in favor of the pleasures and benefits of the white minority. It was argued that the Apartheid system was to the greatest benefit of all involved, yet the question as to the overall injustice of the system was never raised.

A fundamental topic that utilitarianism thus has to deal with, relates to the following question: useful to what passion and interest and for whom? Van der Ven (1998:141) sees Locke as one of the founders of classic libertarian utilitarianism. In *An essay concerning Human Understanding* he elaborates on the idea that to humans goods seems to equal pleasure and evil equals pain. Despite the hedonistic tone of this theory, Locke view of nature as pleasure-related is founded on the belief that God created this nature. To seek pleasure and to try to further it by rational means is to do God's will, which is embodied in the nature that he created. Locke, as a Christian, seemed to believe that God guaranteed "the harmony of interests". When one looks at the South African situation, one starts to doubt whether this kind of reasoning can hold water, and whether a more just procedure of establishing the terms of pleasure seeking would not be necessary. One comes to the conclusion that substantive and procedural moral reasoning should support one another.

3.2. The second search for the good: Finding the good in the local community

Turning now to a further teleological approach, we find that there are those who seek the good in goals determined by communities, since communities contain visions of what is regarded as the good life that is to be worked towards. An excellent example of this type of teleological ethics can be found in Aristotle's thinking. Aristotle sees the ultimate aim (*telos*) of human life as the happy life (*eudaimonia*), which is embedded in the social life of the community or the polis (*politicon zoon*). The content of this happy life equals quality: the quality of good living (*euzoia*) and the quality of good acting (*eupraxia*). In this way of living, happiness is not identical with pleasure, but pleasure is the outcome of living virtuously and acting excellently. One must practice the virtues to be able to achieve this happiness. Virtue lies in avoiding two extremes. Extremes, or vices, are excess and deficiency, overdoing and doing too little, overacting and not acting enough, experiencing too much or too little. The most important virtue in Aristotle's ethics is friendship, because it forms the basis of the communitarian life of the polis. It implies a shared striving towards certain goods and is therefore not limited to the private life, but rather has its roots in some common public project. Friendship goes beyond the goals of mere pleasure and utility, it is rooted in personal respect for and interest in the other. Although Aristotle's ethics provides us with some useful insights into what can be perceived as common values and moral goals, it fails in certain respects. In the first place it is based on a scientifically obsolete biological-teleological anthropology and is ethnocentrist and sexist in nature. Secondly it is also clear that the city-state as it existed in Aristotle's time no longer exists and that our current society is in fact made up of a huge number of poleis, each embodying divergent moral practices and ideas within a plurality of social systems, institutions, sectors, and situations (Van der Ven 1998:140).

Acknowledging the fact that Aristotle's way of using substantive, teleological moral thinking would no longer suffice within our modern society does not mean that other teleological interpretations are not still very popular today. Van der Ven (1998:22) describes communitarianism as an approach in which the individual's belonging to a community is taken as the point of departure. By community, he means the collection of individuals in groups,

insofar as they participate in each other's lives and have certain beliefs, values, and norms in common. These beliefs, norms and values are embodied in stories, narration that contains metaphors, symbols, and ideas by which the group's morality is impregnated, reinforced, and strengthened.

Van der Ven (1998:23) distinguishes two forms of communitarianism. The first consists of people belonging to the Responsive Communitarian Platform, of which Etzioni is the main proponent. They believe that people belong to interdependent and overlapping communities of memory and mutual aid that are rich sources of moral voices. The second form of communitarianism consists of critics of liberal political theory who do not (yet) identify with the communitarian movement in the sense of the Communitarian Platform. Its representatives, such as MacIntyre, Taylor and Sandel do not even identify themselves as Communitarian without certain qualifications. MacIntyre (1988) depicts the lack of moral values in modern society as a result of the disintegration of the moral communities in which moral terms and the values they stood for made sense. He criticizes the "rational subject" of the Enlightenment as a ghostly self-lacking any moral content and therefore unable to engage in any sensible moral discourse. Yet, Van der Ven (1998:23) indicates that MacIntyre himself thinks that rebuilding community life in modern industrialized society would be "ineffective and disastrous".

Another paradigm, often associated with communitarianism because of its emphasis on distinct communities as bearers of values, is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism acknowledges the fact that moral pluralism is not only the result of pluralism within Western culture, but also in non-Western culture. The main distinction between Communitarianism and Multiculturalism can therefore be described as the fact that communitarianism does not take into account the complex composition of today's multicultural society.

The question of how to deal with the demands for recognition by particular groups made in the name of nationalism or multiculturalism, has led to an extensive debate which is vividly illustrated in the publication *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* in which various authors respond to Charles Taylor's essay: *The politics of recognition*. Taylor (1994:

39) identifies two major changes that occurred in the public sphere that raised the question as to how one should deal with group identities within the sphere of a liberal-democratic political system. The first change is the move from "honor" as primary value to the acknowledgement of "dignity" as prime value. This led to the politics of universalism, emphasizing the equal dignity of all citizens, with the content of this politics being the equalization of rights and entitlements. The second change can be described as the development of the modern notion of identity, based on the distinctness of the individual or the group compared to everyone else. This gave rise to the politics of difference, meaning that everyone should be recognized for his/her unique identity. The problem is that the recognition of both the politics of universal dignity and the politics of difference cause problems. On the one hand you insist on nondiscrimination, being blind to all aspects that make people different, on the other, you plead for the acknowledgement of unique needs and therefore for differential treatment (Taylor 1994:40).

Taylor (1994: 58) discusses the manifestation of this problem in Canadian Quebec, where French nationalists insist on upholding their culturally unique identity, even if this causes certain discriminatory practices. He (1994:60) argues that there is a form of the politics of equal respect, as enshrined in a liberalism of rights, which is inhospitable to difference, because it insists on a uniform application of the rules defining these rights, and is suspicious of collective goals. He indicates that there are other models of liberal society that call for the invariant defense of certain rights. Yet, these models are willing to weigh the importance of certain forms of uniform treatment against the importance of cultural survival, and opt sometimes choose in favor of the latter. These models display elements of the true democratic empowerment of communities. Taylor (1991:119) mitigates the sense of powerlessness that people experience in the large-scale, centralized, bureaucratic states by supporting Tocqueville's decentralization of power. He makes it clear that they are not in the end procedural models of liberalism, but are grounded very much on judgments about what makes a good life - judgments in which the integrity of cultures has an important place. Taylor (1994: 64) pleads further that we do not only acknowledge the right of these cultures to survive, but that we also acknowledge their worth, based on a premise that we owe equal respect to all cultures, which involves something like an act of faith.

Critics of Taylor have pointed to the fact that judgments we make on the value or worth of other cultures can never escape our own categories and terms of reference, and are therefore open to the distortions and prejudices that are part of our symbolic life-worlds. This point has been made concerning the way in which moral judgments we made about each other in South Africa is the result of our categories, our language and its underlying prejudices (Chapter 2). The danger in Taylor's theory in my view lies in the fact that he uncritically uses us-them terminology without acknowledging the fact that each individual in a multicultural society might exhibit a very diverse configuration of value-systems in him/herself. Wolf (1994: 81) points out that the failure to respect another culture does not lie in beliefs about the relative merits of one culture compared to the other, and the remedy is not to be found in acknowledging that other cultures have something of significant importance to teach the world. Rather, Wolf feels that Taylor does not recognize the fact that the "other" culture might in fact be part of "our own", that they in fact constitute our community. Apiah (1994:155) goes even further in indicating that dialogue with the other shapes the identity of each person as he/she develops and that these separate and unique communities that Taylor speaks of in fact coexist within individuals. The further danger is that in allowing communal perceptions of the good to persist uncritically based on an act of faith and to protect communities regardless of what their perception of the good is, robs the individuals within those communities of their right to choose their own good, and to dissociate from the good of the community if they so wish. The good chosen by the collective must never be allowed to function as a metanarrative that excludes the voices of minorities or the powerless, thereby allowing discrimination against them. The good of the community then functions as a metanarrative undermining dissent, discussion and therefore also personal and communal growth.

The dangers inherent in both Communitarianism and Multiculturalism center around the fact that in protecting distinct group identities, one runs the risk of undermining the freedom of individuals within those groups to choose their own moral values and to dissociate from those imposed by the group. Van der Ven (1998:27) argues that moral education must break through tradition - social habits, customs and rites - insofar as they hinder freedom as the

core of morality. The person's autonomy, self-determination and emancipation should not be made subservient to the protection of the community. Within multiculturalism, the existence of various different cultures and groups may be perceived as a danger to the dominant group, or it may be seen as an opportunity for society's culture to be enriched. Either way, it has certain dangers. If the dominant group in society tries to shield themselves from outside influences, it will create even less space for individual dissent and choice, and undermine moral freedom. If it tries to incorporate or integrate all differences, the moral identity of the group is at risk.

Communitarians want to maintain that they advocate a balance between too much and too little control of the individual. They believe that the individual's self-regulation is determined by a kind of psychic infrastructure for living the moral life. Acting in accordance with moral virtues, values and norms the self-regulating self is shaped through habituation processes within the community and thus becomes a communitarian self. In other words, the discipline exercised is a communitarian discipline, the habits communitarian habits, and the self a communitarian self. The Communitarians acknowledges the existence of other groups with distinct convictions, values and norms, and accommodate them from the perspective of the core values of democracy and human rights. According to the Communitarians, young people need to be educated from the perspective of the spirit of the community of communities, which is characterized by " pluralism-within-unity" (Van der Ven 1998:67). This solution seems to be presented as too harmonious when one considers the fact that in today's Western society values and norms are pluriform. These values and norms cannot be depicted as a system of concentric circles, with an innermost hard core of stable values and outer circles of changeable, variable and pluriform values. The irony is, that these core values based on generalized human rights and democracy, violates precisely the uniqueness and differences between communities that the critics of the liberal "ghostly rational self" want to restore.

What becomes clear, is that when Communitarians have to provide content to their "telos", they revert back to modernist assumptions that cannot deal with plurality. It either represents a restricted version of the good as decided upon by a specific community,

excluding other versions of the good and postulating one, unambiguous truth, or it embraces certain universal core values that is supposed to transcend differences and bind us all to a common view of the good, despite our differences about more specific aspects. Yet, the values of democracy and human rights advocated by the Communitarians are not common to all groups, in fact they are extremely Western and modernist in content. Furthermore, these core values are both general and vague. It undermines specificity and particularity and therefore is of little value in dealing with plurality in moral discourse.

Now it would certainly solve this dilemma if the solution to every specific moral problem would be self-evident and accessible to individuals coming from all groups if we only use the right strategies and tools. Some philosophers believe that they can provide us with just such devices. In the next section we will analyze the possibility that through the use of objective reasoning we can make our specific individual choices in such a way that it anticipates all similar problems and thereby provides us with some universalizable rules for conduct

3.3.   Universalist moral reasoning:

One of the approaches generally understood as procedural in nature is deontology. Hoffman (1995) describes deontology as part of the broader category of ethical absolutism, which can be divided into consequentialism and nonconsequentialism. Under consequentialism Hoffman understands ethical egoism and utilitarianism. Under nonconsequentialism he understands Kantianism, or deontological theories.

The deontological theories make certain claims as to how things are and what moral rules are therefore self-evident in the way that things are. The father of deontological ethics is beyond dispute Immanuel Kant, who in his moral theory of the categorical imperative formulates two basic maxims that should guide moral decision-making. In the first place he is of the opinion that something cannot be good if it cannot be the will of all rational individuals (Van der Ven 1998:162). Therefore the first maxim states that a moral decision must always be put to the universalization test. "Act only on that maxim through which you

can at the same time wills that it should become a universal law" (Kant 1964:88). Can all rational individuals in a similar situation uphold the decision that you have just made, across the boundaries of space, time and circumstance? One should thus not refrain from breaking promises because of its negative effects as the utilitarians would insist, but rather because it cannot be willed as a universal maxim (Van der Ven 1998:145).

Kant's second criteria for deciding whether something is moral or not, is to apply what has throughout history been known as the Golden Rule, namely that one should not treat your neighbor in a way that you would not have him/ her treat you. It is formulated as follows: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant 1964:96). The principle of utility is therefore categorically rejected and deontology is therefore antithetical to utilitarianism in any form (Bok 1995:164).

These tests that we can apply in deciding what is moral and what not, have been described by Ricoeur as the "royal gates of universality". Once it successfully passes through the royal gate, it takes on the form of an obligation, a moral constraint. The law of universalization therefore appears in the mode of the imperative, which one is compelled to obey. Yet this does not undermine the individual's autonomy, since autonomy is to be understood as self-legislation through which one rationally prescribes a rule to oneself, as if making a contract with oneself. The moral self is therefore the self-obedient autonomous self (Van der Ven 1998:163).

Kant's theory has through the course of the twentieth century been subject to numerous commentaries and critiques. Without attempting to give a comprehensive overview of its critics, I will attempt to at least indicate various strands of criticisms. The first strand I would like to pursue is the point that in universalizing moral decisions and in attempting to speak of the treatment of all of "humanity", **particularity and difference tend to be overlooked or underemphasized.** Particularity is overlooked both as it pertains to the individual making the decision and the "others" that are taken into consideration in making the decision.

In the first place, in stressing the individual's autonomy, he overlooks the multitude of concrete situations that might mitigate or even principally relativize the individual's self-legislative concern. Autonomy is an abstraction that is in effect always dialectically related to heteronomy (Van der Ven 1998: 173). Human beings are influenced by inclinations, desires and passions and therefore can hardly rely on objective rationality. In fact, the demise of modern dualisms such as subjective versus objective, facts versus values and public versus private have been convincingly argued in the work of many of the so-called postmodern philosophers, as well as in twentieth century feminist philosophy.

With regards to overlooking the particularity of the other parties involved in or affected by the moral decision, Ricoeur for instance argues that Kant's formulation of the Golden Rule transforms the neighbor into the abstract category of "humanity". Love is transformed into respect for the Other, thereby objectifying what might otherwise depend on subjective feelings. Respect to all in Kant's terms should be applied indifferently and without distinction. The fundamental problem identified by Ricoeur (1992:240) relates to the fact that Kant's indifference and indistinctiveness overlooks the respect that is owed to individuals in their diversity, specificity, and uniqueness.

The fact that it sees "humanity" as an abstract category that may never be treated as a means to an end immobilizes Kant's theory in situations where a conflict of so-called universal maxims occurs, for instance in the case of a conflict of duties. Should one kill one person to save a whole community? Can an affirmative answer to this question be universalized? Is it always right to kill one person to save a community, or should one adjudicate this kind of conflict of duties in each particular situation? Van der Ven (1998:146) is of the opinion that deontological thought does not provide an answer to the question of how to deal with moral differences in conflict situations.

Ricoeur (1992:239) argues in his *Oneself and Another* that Kant wants to maintain principles that contradict one another in practice. In the first place Kant wants to maintain autonomy based on universal reasonableness in all persons, which makes all people equal. Yet, he at the

same time wants to maintain that every person is an end in itself, which results in the acceptance of plurality and difference. Now in real life situations, these two aspects often stand against one another, for in order to allow for difference, you must accept the unequal distribution of abilities, means and effort and therefore in fact, that all people are not equal in all respects. To maintain the principle of equality, you then have to treat people differently, in effect, unequally, to be just. Deontology then comes to depend on procedural distributive justice, as will become clear when Rawls' theories is discussed later on in this chapter. Distributive justice is in effect an attempt at maintaining deontological principles by reinterpreting them in terms of teleological conceptions of the "good life" for everyone in society. Ricoeur (1992:229) also argues that the symmetry of the Golden Rule develops against the background of dissymmetry, in which one is the agent, the one who does, and the other is the patient, the one who is done to and suffers. This is the dissymmetry of violence which could also be understood as the "power-to-do" and the "power-to-do-over". This violence does not always result in physical violence, but sometimes also in the violence of humiliation, powerlessness etc. The dimension of interpersonal life that Kant describes tends to be focused on the activity of the agent making the moral decision by emphasizing the respect that the agent should have for the other. But respect does not determine every aspect of interpersonal life, which is characterized not only by activity, but also in a dialectical way, by passivity (Van der Ven 1998:173). The face of the other reveals her/ his need to be taken care of and appeals to me, makes a demand on me that I cannot through my own agency direct without distorting it.

From a feminist point of view, critics emphasize the fact that Kant's moral rationalism is male dominated because qualities of character traditionally considered as male are placed at the center of Kant's scheme. Therefore, his philosophy can simply be explained as the reflection of a male dominated society and clearly sanctions male superiority. Some feminists, focus on his arguments about women's potential to become free rational beings. Women are firstly accorded only status as passive citizens; they may not, by self-improvement or advancement, aspire to the status of active citizens. Second, women have limited potential because of their intrinsic nature, which is exemplified in the marriage contract and allows a man to dominate in public life in exchange for her dominion in domestic

life. This type of feminist critique serves to contextualize Kantianism within social and historical parameters.

But portraying Kant as simply a narrow-minded bourgeois in eighteenth-century Germany might not be an adequate approach. The problematic nature of Kant's moral views comes to the fore more explicitly in his belief that to act out of duty necessarily implies acting out of principle - something that men were capable of but women were not. The posture of abstract speculation - a male characteristic in Kantian terms, and Kant's guiding logic of "autonomous selves" is an abstraction that supports the definition of "corporations" and "neighbors" as equals. The latter in turn supports "the responsibility of business" as that of anybody else - no more, and sometimes even less. Kantianism, taken uncritically, positions the corporation on a plane of equality with abstract individuals. For instance, take Velasquez' citing of the case of balancing a corporation's interest in financial gain with its concern for the health of its neighbors as an example. Kant's categorical imperative will tell us that everyone must have equal moral rights and that everyone must have the same respect for the protection of the interests of others as for his/ her own. According to feminists such as Calas and Smircich (1999:61) the patriarchal biases inherent in the posing of this question is clear. If we considered the unprincipled (according to Kant) characteristics such as sensitivity, compassion, benevolence and particular judgments become our guiding values, it is impossible to argue against the logic of certain business ethics dilemmas in the way that ethicists like Velasquez do. One would for instance insist in the above example that the health of concrete individuals should be held as an important right, and not something that is negotiable.

A second strand of criticisms is related to **the instrumental reasoning that underpins deontological thought**. Kant's insistence that one should use the universalizability test as guide in making moral decisions, and refrain from considering consequences, has a certain form of "pretzel logic" inherent to it. In saying that it would not be possible to universalize lying or breaking promises, one is making a very strong statement as to what kind of outcomes one desires and what kind of society one would ideally choose to create. As Van der Ven (1998:145) indicates, an injunction against false promises has to do with the

calculation of the multitude of advantages and especially - in this case - disadvantages that would ensue in the intra-personal, interpersonal and societal domain if this principle were to be adopted as a universal maxim.

An illustration of how Kantian ideas can lead to instrumentalist management practices, is provided by Bowie (1999:86) who writes that a Kantian manager would probably subscribe to a very specific theory of human nature. He is of the opinion that a Kantian would assume that employees prefer to be self-directed, that they are willing to assume responsibility and want to act imaginatively and creatively, and that they act morally much of the time and can therefore be trusted. For Kant, if individuals do not behave accordingly, their inclinations are interfering with their rational nature. That is, some desire or urge is preventing the person from acting in a rational manner, or the person is suffering from a weakness of will. Bowie (1999:87) goes even further to say that as a Kantian manager, one should treat people according to the positive theory of human nature described above, since the power of this self-fulfilling prophecy will then help them develop into rational, moral human beings. Bowie's theory is clearly based on a very Western, liberal conception of certain goods, which he then assumes will apply to all people in all contexts. In fact, he believes that if you treat people according to this theory, they will in effect become what you have all along believed they should be!

Korsgaard (1997:245) indicates the implications of Kant's instrumental principle in order to argue that the instrumental principle cannot stand alone. For the instrumental principle to provide you with a reason to act, you must believe that the fact that you will an end is a reason for the end. It's not exactly that there has to be *further* reason; it's just that one must take the act of one's own will to be normative for you. Willing the end gives it a normative status for you, and the fact that you are willing the end effectively makes it good. The instrumental principle can only become normative if we consider ourselves capable of laying down laws for ourselves, or as Kant would put it, if we take our own wills to be legislative. This can also be traced back to the conception of ourselves as ends-in-ourselves. According to Korsgaard (1997:249) the normative force of the instrumental principle seem to depend on our having a way of convincing ourselves that there are reasons for the end we

choose, and that they are therefore good. Unless something attaches normativity to our ends, there can be no requirement to employ the means necessary to realize them. The fact that the agent in some self-legislative act willed something rationally does not in itself give it normative content. Who decides which rationally willed acts are actually good acts?

The fact is that certain reasoned decisions can have detrimental moral effects. Kant's argument that autonomy commits us to certain substantive principles that can be reached by his universalizability test seems to be weak in the face of the example of rational reasoning employed by the Apartheid government in South Africa. They may have reasoned that the best rational solution to South Africa's diversity problems is separate development. They may even have judged it to be in the best interest of all in terms of the Categorical Imperative. They could have gone even further by applying the universalizability test to it and arguing that it would be good if this strategy could be universalized to all societies across the globe. They may have thought that it is actually a good way of seeing each ethnic group as an end in itself, worthy of separate territories, self-government and culture specific practices. The problem is, it is impossible to find a way to test whether this political strategy is indeed a good way if dealing with diversity, which should in fact be applied universally. The danger is that it remains a hypothetical theory, which can be justified and rationalized in various ways. Rationalized theories tend to only show its true colors when applied in practice, such as in the case of Apartheid, when the reality of the discrimination and racism that resulted from the political system, created an uproar all over the world. It is clear that somehow this type of reasoning can avoid crucial moral questions. For instance, it never questions whether impartial, objective "reasonability" may not in fact serve very specific interests. It also "reasons" away the point of view of the distinct "other" by assuming they would have exactly the same "reasonable" point of view about the best ends. And if by chance they would display another view of the good, they could always be judged unreasonable or irrational, which would render them unable to self-legislate and which would also, according to Kant's instrumental reasoning, make them immoral.

The reason why universalizability seems to be such a popular and seemingly plausible moral strategy, is the inherent desire of humans to be able to analyze, synthesize and categorize

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reality in order to be able to predict the outcomes of all situations. Taylor (1997:286) describes Kant's theory as a combination of British empiricism and Continental rationalism. Form and categories function as a grid or matrix through which experience is unified, organized and thereby rendered intelligible. The matrix is seen as prior to experience, therefore universal. All experience is mediated by this grid and therefore the actual reality, the "Ding-an-Sich" that Kant speaks of becomes forever inaccessible. Kant tries to overcome the absolutized oppositions between subject and object in his third critique. He tries to mediate the theoretical and practical faculties of the mind. His analysis is organized around the notion of an inner teleology. Cause and effect relationships combine itself in self-organizing structures. Reason, therefore, in both its theoretical and practical capacities, functions to create unity out of plurality and to reduce manyness to oneness. Yet Kant's account leaves unanswered the question of the relationship between the two rational functions. While reason synthesizes and unifies, it remains unclear whether reason itself is unified. Moreover, because of the fact that reason imposes form upon nature, the unification of subject and object can only be partial and the movement from heteronomy to autonomy remains incomplete (Taylor 1986:5).

The reunification of subjectivity and objectivity in artistic activity is Kant's way of resolving the dichotomy (Taylor 1986:6). Yet the unity of nature and reason in the work of art is possible only if subjectivity and objectivity are implicitly one. The identity of nature and freedom is present in the artistic genius, because genius is natural talent and in creating the work of art, the genius responds naturally and spontaneously. Yet this spontaneity is not arbitrary, random or contingent. Rather, the genius acts according to the rules, principles, or ideas with which he is naturally endowed. Since original artistic activity is both natural and free, it is a self-realization rather than the violation of nature. Taylor (1986: 8) argues that Kant's argument in the third critique fails to overcome the oppositions of the first two Critiques on at least three counts. In the first place, though the activity of the genius is rational, it is, nonetheless, unconscious. Furthermore, the aesthetic idea is, according to Kant, irreducibly indeterminate and, hence, cannot be completely defined by any concept. In the third place, the reconciliation of the opposites embodied in the work of art remains an abstract ideal or "regulative idea" that guides and

extends the synthetic activity of reason but is not concretely actualized in time and space. Through this process of setting idea and ideal over against nature and history, Kant's work of art deepens rather than resolves the oppositions that sunder human experience.

Hegel has another way of dealing with the dichotomy between subject and object. He historizes, systematizes and ontologizes Kant's aesthetic idea (Taylor 1997:288). Hegel maintains that free activity presupposes complete self-consciousness, which can be realized only in transparent conceptual knowledge. He holds that it is necessary to move beyond artistic representations and poetic images to conceptual reflection and rational knowledge. His task is thus twofold: in the first place he must give conceptual expression to Kant's aesthetic idea, and secondly he must establish the actuality of this speculative idea by uncovering its concrete embodiment in nature and history. Hegel develops his theory on the spirit that is " pure self-recognition in absolute otherness", or otherwise put, identity-in-difference. As Taylor (1986:8) explains it: he wants neither to collapse difference in identity nor dissolve identity in difference. Hegel's speculative idea is neither a subjective idea nor an abstract ideal but is the actual Logos or concrete structure of everything that exists. This absolute subject, which Hegel also describes as Geist, is not an individual that stands over and against all else but is the entire natural-historical process comprehended as an evolving dialectical totality. Every particular, every individual that exists is a member of and a moment in the unfolding, evolving whole. But as Taylor (1986:9) indicates, Hegel's speculative system both constitutes the closure of the search for unity and identity that characterizes Western philosophy, and arrives at a form of knowledge that is supposed to overcome the doubt and uncertainty that occasioned Descartes's inward turn. Hegel returns difference to identity and other to same. Taylor (1986:10) puts it as follows: " *In the life of the spirit, alterity finally disappears in the full light of transparent self-consciousness and absolute knowledge*".

Although Nietzsche agrees with Hegel's criticism of Kant's "Ding-an-Sich", he fictionalizes, relativizes and desystematizes the Hegelian concept. Kant's "Ding-an-Sich" is nonsensical, because if one removes all the relationships, all the properties and all the activities of a thing, the thing does not remain at all. The "Thing" is the multiplicity of relationships,

properties and activities. In and through it everything arises and passes away. Yet, Taylor (1997:290) indicates that unlike the closed structure of the Hegelian system, the open fabric of the Nietzschean web creates a fragmentary field in which aleatory associations generate unexpected patterns that disorganize as much as they organize. The Kantian categorical grid and the Hegelian systematic logic, which reflect and indorse processes of industrialization, are ill suited to a postindustrial environment governed by global structures of information and flows of images. The Nietzschean notions of fragmentation, temporary unions and change is much more applicable within the postindustrial networks-based society. While previous technologies do not simply disappear, the overlays of various electronic networks transform the very conditions by which we experience and develop knowledge (Taylor 1997:293).

Metaphysical reasoning is unsuitable in our current context, because of the way that it undermines difference and particularity. The political theory of John Rawls acts as an illustration of what Kantian thinking amounts to in everyday practice. Universalistic reasoning such as that of Rawls provides the basis for consensual values, because it satisfies the philosophic ideal of consensus reached by using rational procedures in the same way as in scientific rationality. It restricts morality to a central minimum core that provides the minimum grammar of morality that everyone can agree on. This strategy of finding a minimal consensus on universal values illustrated very well by the work of Rawls. Our discussion will make it clear that Kohlberg was correct in his depiction of Rawls' theory: *"Morality as justice best renders our view of morality as universal"* (Van der Ven 1998:210).

The development of the theory of the social contract is a good illustration of the use of deontological guidelines has for living together in institutions. In the deontological "kingdom of ends", everybody is an autonomous self-legislator on the condition that what is legislated is respectful of all other people in their common status as legislators. The rule of justice is based on a procedure that establishes rights and obligations within the parameters of a social contract. John Rawls' theory of justice is based on the idea that rational individuals under the veil of ignorance (meaning that they don't know what position they will have in society) will come to certain rational conclusions as to how society should be arranged to the

benefit of all who live in it. His theory holds that these rational individuals will come to two conclusions (Van der Ven 1998: 167). In the first place they will agree that each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty, which would be compatible with a similar liberty for others. The second conclusion they will come to is that even though one might declare that justice should be based on equality, the reality of societies reflects inequality, which should be dealt with fairly. Therefore the second principle that is agreed upon would be this: " Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all"(Van der Ven 1998: 167). He also insists that any arrangement of social and economic inequalities should be made such that it would still be to the greatest possible benefit of the least advantaged, or the lowest classes or positions in society.

As Van der Ven (1998:167) indicates, this makes Rawls a leftist in the eyes of conservative thinkers, because he advocates an egalitarianism of a sort, and a rightist in the eyes of others, because he legitimizes inequality and differences in wealth and income. For someone like Charles Taylor, Rawls is not rightist enough, because he has no place for a just distribution of merit. Yet Ricoeur sees the main problem with Rawls' theory in the clear individualism at work in Rawls' contractualism. The original position is a position of individuals (Van der Ven 1998:168). Therefore one can ask the question as to whether the social contract equals a community, and whether it indeed constitutes the kind of community that people would want to live in? Sooner or later procedural justice cannot do without substantive ideas as to what constitutes the good. Even if Rawls rejects utilitarianism as an approach because it insists on some teleological conception of the good, Rawls himself introduces another utilitarian idea, implied in the balance between inequality and benefit for all. This idea is typically utilitarian, since it contains the idea of sacrifice for the realization of something else. As Van der Ven (1998:169) explains it: "Substance transcends procedure; procedure does not correspond to the fullness of substance. Ultimately, procedure is negative; it can indicate only what should not be done, not what should be done".

The combined effect of the instrumentalist character of deontological reasoning and its denial of the unique and the particular makes it a very problematic approach in pluralistic

environments. In her critique of Rawls' theory in her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Iris Young (1990:100) argues that the modernist ideal of impartiality as the hallmark of the moral reasoning of the transcendental subject undermines difference in at least three ways. First, it denies the particularity of situations, since the reasoning subject, emptied of all particularity, treats all situations according to the same moral rules. The more rules can be reduced to a single rule or moral principle, the more impartiality and universality will be guaranteed. Second, in its requirement of dispassion, impartiality seeks to master or eliminate heterogeneity in the form of feeling. This requires abstracting from the bodily being, its needs and inclinations, and from the feelings that attach to the experience the particularity of things and events. If one accepts a more embodied, holistic view of morality as will be developed in chapter 4, it becomes possible to see bodiliness as a crucial part of establishing normative statements within moral reasoning. The third, and the most important way that the ideal of impartiality reduces particularity to unity is in reducing the plurality of moral subjects to one subjectivity. Impartial reason is supposed to represent a point of view that all and any rational individual can accept, precisely by abstracting from the situational particularities that individualize them.

Young (1990:101) indicates that even though Rawls insists on the plurality of selves as a necessary starting point for a conception of justice the reasoning of the original position is nevertheless monological. The veil of ignorance removes any differentiating characteristics among individuals, and thus ensures that all will reason from identical assumptions and the same universal point of view. This universal category requires expelling those differences that do not fit into it. Like other instances of the logic of identity, the desire to construct impartial moral reason results not in unity, but in the dichotomy between reason and feeling. Setting up theoretical distinctions does not however inhibit real-life practices. As Young (1990:103) explains: *"Feelings, desires, and commitments do not cease to exist and motivate just because they have been excluded from the definition of moral reason. They lurk as inarticulate shadows, belying the claim to comprehensiveness of universalist reason."*

The ideal of impartiality generates yet another dichotomy - that between general will and particular interests. In modern political thought this dichotomy appears between public

authority that represents the general interest and private individuals with their own desires, unshareable and incommunicable. The idea of the civic public excludes women and other groups, Young (1990:117) argues, because its rational and universal status derives only from its opposition to affectivity, particularity and the body. Habermas attempts to address these problems in his communicative action theory, but according to Young (1990:118) a strong strain of Kant's universalism remains in Habermas, which undermines his move to a radically pluralist participatory politics of need interpretation. Habermas retains vestiges of the dichotomy between reason and affectivity by firmly separating discourse about feelings from discourse about norms. His model of language itself relies on a paradigm of discursive argumentation, de-emphasizing the metaphorical, rhetorical, playful, and embodied aspects of speech that are an important aspect of its communicative effect (Young 1990:118).

In criticizing both what he calls "liberal politics", and "republican politics", Habermas (1994: 121) brings in even more evidence with regard to the limitations of both mere proceduralist and substantialist approaches to dealing with pluralist communities. The function of liberal politics, according to Habermas, is to bundle together private interests against governments specializing in pursuing collective goals. Republican politics has a broader function than the mediating role of liberal politics, since it is rather constituted by the processes of society as a whole and is therefore a reflective form of substantial ethical life. In this way contemporary republicans give public communication a communitarian reading. Habermas calls this ethical constriction of political discourse into question and argues that politics should not be assimilated to a hermeneutical process of self-explication. Instead, he (1994:128) advocates what he calls a discourse theory of democracy that works with higher-level intersubjectivity of communication processes. Discourse theory invests democratic processes with normative connotations stronger than those found in the liberal model, but weaker than those found in the republican model. Discourse theory depends on the institutionalization of procedures and conditions of communication. Habermas is of the opinion that institutionalization is of the utmost importance since only a system can act in the political playing field. The critical question as to how to manage the institutions and structures that mediate this communicative process in a way that allows them to maintain

their temporary character and their functions as mediators, remains however. These structures very easily get a life of their own and then start to restrict and predetermine communicative processes in such a way that it undermines individual freedom and creative renewal of the system.

3.4. The intermediate position: Minimalist common values:

Even in the pursuit of minimalist common values, there are many variations and approaches available. One example of a philosopher who attempted this search for common values in the field of interreligious dialogue is the renowned philosopher John Hick. John Hick boldly went where few have dared to tread before him, and his work indeed brought mutual respect and insight amongst believers of various religions. Yet the final step in Hick's theory is to propose that all religions have pieces of the same puzzle, and that if we are to make sense of the Transcendent (interreligious referral to God), we will have to compromise, synthesize and in effect, syncretize. He for instance suggested that Christians may want to let go of their beliefs in the Trinity, and their confession that Jesus is the Son of God, since these statements make exclusivist claims to superiority and Truth that restricts the interreligious dialogue, and that also hinders all of us in getting closer to the Transcendent. To suggest that the values or beliefs that religions have in common might, or even (as John Hick argues) should, transcend those beliefs that give them their unique identity and integrity, may be somewhat extreme. But this is exactly what happens if unique particularities are sacrificed in order to accommodate what we might have in common. It can be argued that these new structures of commonalties undermine the integrity and spirituality of specific groups to such an extent that the greater goal that Hick so vigorously pursues, namely access to the Transcendent is ironically undermined. When seeking cooperation between people from various religions, the discussion should focus on gathering various religious responses to a very specific contextual problem. One can then gather insights about the values that the various religions may consider applicable to the situation, develop an understanding of how each religion would interpret that specific value in terms of the problem at hand and develop a temporary consensus and action-plan. This would however only be applicable to that specific situation and would have to be revised

regularly as cooperation progresses. This does not in any way constitute a timeless construct that fuses religions into one.

We find similar attempts to bind religious groups to a set of common values in the work of Hans Küng and his project of constructing a "global ethic". Although the declaration entitled "Towards a Global Ethic" set an admirable agenda for working toward greater tolerance, mutual trust, and cooperation within communities as well as between them, Bok (1995:32) indicates that it does not carry out its announced intention of singling out minimalist core values acceptable to all. As a result, it displays intolerance toward those not capable of living up to its highest, maximalist ideals. It even uses words such as "irrevocable", "unconditional" and makes statements such as "every form of egoism should be rejected". Bok (1995:33) indicates that this calls for a level of self-abnegation that very few can attain. The broad guidelines for human behavior that the declaration develops cannot be labeled minimalist, since most of them are not consistently held, even by the world's major religions, let alone by more secular traditions. The maximalist nature of the declaration is revealed quite explicitly when Küng calls for a "global transformation of consciousness", which clearly does not involve the more than twenty percent of humanity estimated to be without religious alliance, nor the many religious people who would be wary of such a transformation (Bok 1995:34). Seeing religious consensus as a way to get to "thick" moral consensus looses sight of the fact that in many cases, religion is sometimes a handy instrument used by those in power to protect their interests. No system that allows the voices of the powerless to be eliminated in this way should be seen as a "global ethic". Seeking consensus is not necessarily negative, but any consensus can become dangerous if it is being portrayed as universal, timeless truths. It will always be open to misinterpretation or abuse if not seen as something contextual, temporary and revisable.

When one takes a closer look at Hans Küng's global ethics, one finds that he makes certain distinct assumptions with regard to the global project. Küng (1997:17) for instance states that globalization is unavoidable, ambivalent, incalculable, and then surprisingly, he also holds the seemingly contradictory position that globalization can be controlled rationally. He is of the opinion that global phenomena are not necessary natural processes, but rather that

they are developments which - with certain limits - can be guided. Küng argues that just as there is a need for a new global law against excessive speculation, so there is also a need for an ethical minimum, to guarantee a life together on our globe that is to some degree peaceful. Küng seems to underestimate not only business' distinct dislike of over-regulation, he also seems to loose sight of the complex nature of the interactions and factors that influence the global village. This is what gives it the character of volatility, instability and ambiguity. While Küng seems to recognize the fact that globalization involves ambivalence and incalculability, he seems to underestimate it when it comes to the measure of control he thinks can be exercised over this complex phenomenon.

A second very questionable strategy employed by Küng is to assume that religion can supply the world with some basic function that cannot be performed by ethics alone. He sees religion not as a later exponent of a common global ethic, but as something that deepens it and gives it foundation (Küng 1997:26). He provided us with four perspectives to make the point that religion provides us with things that a universal ethic cannot:

- Only religion can provide an unconditional guarantee for our unconditional norms, our deepest motivations and our highest ideals and at the same time give them concrete form.
- Only religion can provide a basis for protest and resistance against unjust conditions and give expression to the longing for the "wholly other" which is already at work and cannot be silenced within the world.
- Only religion can create a home of trust, security and hope through shared symbols and rituals. In other words, religion can offer an ultimate spiritual community and home.
- Only religion can communicate a specific depth dimension, and a comprehensive horizon of interpretation even in the face of suffering, injustice, guilt and meaninglessness.

It would be excessively skeptical to argue that religion cannot play an important role in all this, yet one cannot help but question the assumption that religion is the "only" possible vehicle for establishing these values. Not only does it make the missionary assumption that

all people should and would at some stage be converted to some or other faith, but also that religions can in fact agree on shared norms, rituals and convictions to such an extent that it would provide the world with a global ethic. This thesis would not only undermine the integrity and uniqueness of the religions involved, but will also create a metastructure and a metanarrative of the kind that inevitably runs the risk of domination, exclusion and discrimination against those who fall outside it.

It also seems as if Küng works with a definition of ethics that sees it as something very rational, impartial and objective in nature. One can argue that instead of relying solely on religion to move individuals morally, one should rather challenge this understanding of ethics. The view of moral reasoning advocated here includes not only religion, but also bodiliness, social relations, and culture as important aspects of ethical motivation. Moral discourse infused by these aspects can indeed be a very strong motivational force.

Küng (1997:27) for instance argues that business culture has always been important, but that today it has become of strategic relevance. He maintains that business culture ultimately consists of a combination of decisiveness with the values, criteria, norms and modes of behavior of executives and their colleagues in a business. Executives themselves should therefore become aware of their own moral and religious values, and make sure that their colleagues and employees see something of what motivates their heads and hearts. One would support Küng in his call for allowing executives and anyone involved in business to refer to their religious values as an important part of their moral configuration and to resist banishing religion and morality to the so-called private sphere. Yet, the assumption that someone will definitely be a better manager or executive if he or she adheres to specifically religious values, is questionable. Many instances exist of executives and managers without any religious alliance who upholds very strong moral values.

In her analysis of various approaches towards common values, Sisela Bok (1995) tries to steer clear of extreme foundationalism, whilst at the same time maintaining that basic, minimalist common values are indeed possible. She (1995:70) argues that in rejecting certain foundationalist claims, such as claims that certain moral values are divinely ordained,

part of the natural order, or that they are externally valid without exception, that they exist independently of human beings, many critics of foundationalism throw out the baby with the bath water. In rejecting foundationalism, she argues that we do not also have to give up on the idea that certain values are in fact held in common by all human beings, or that common values need to be worked out in all human societies. Bok (1995:12) defends four basic propositions:

1) Certain basic values necessary to collective survival have to be formulated in every society. A minimalist set of such values can be recognized across societal and other boundaries.

2) These basic values are indispensable to human coexistence, though far from sufficient, at every level of personal and working life and of family, national and international relations.

3) It is possible to affirm both common values and respect for diversity and in this way to use the basic values to critique abuses perpetrated in the name either of more general values or of ethnic, religious, political, or some other diversity.

4) The need to pursue the inquiry about which basic values can be shared across cultural boundaries is urgent, if societies are to have some common ground for cross-cultural dialogue and for debate on how to best cope with hazards that do not stop at cultural boundaries.

Bok's approach seems to be an attempt at using the basic values of the liberal democracy as parameters for cross-cultural discussion, tolerance and cooperation. Yet in effect, she is making clear assumptions as to what constitutes the good life, what goals are worth pursuing and what programs should therefore receive priority. In assuming that the goals that each society identifies as priorities in their specific contexts would yield similarities across societal boundaries, she assumes basically the same "goods" will be identified by the parts, thereby providing the bigger, global collective with a clear vision of the good. The fact is that various levels of development, differences in cultural and historical background, political and economic forces, may lead to very different priorities in communities across the globe. Another factor that Bok seems to underestimate is how quickly these priorities can be changed by factors such as governments in power, economic or even natural disasters, or wars. The variables that come into play in particular societies are endless.

Furthermore, even if people can periodically or perhaps even episodically agree on basic values, rights and commitments, the way in which they arrange their lives to apply these values may differ dramatically. Justice may be agreed upon by all societies, but in a Muslim society justice towards women is enacted by protecting them, shielding them from public life, assigning them a specific role within their community and restricting them to it. Nominalist agreements on minimalist values seem to have little effect in practice. If Bok is going to use basic values such as justice and equality in affirming both common values and respect for diversity, is she going to criticize the Muslims for their way of treating women? If she is, she will have to make sure that they share her understanding of the practices and contents of the term "justice". Unfortunately it becomes very difficult to come to a consensus with people who work with a very different perception of "justice" and whose political and social application of this understanding of the term also sets the parameters for any moral discussion on equality and rights.

Bok's appeal to common values that facilitate cross-cultural cooperation pertains to a basic question that this dissertation wants to address -how do you get people that are very different from each other and hold divergent beliefs and values to feel close enough, loyal enough, and committed enough to collective goals to get them to work with others in groups on communal projects. We will all agree that certain projects are just too big for any individual to address on her/ his own. I doubt that getting individuals to subscribe to some set of abstract minimalist values that they share with the rest of humanity is going to get us very far. They assist in setting the broad, proceduralist parameters for the discussion, but I want to maintain that what is needed is very specific, contextualized solutions that are the result of corresponding deliberations on which values apply, what they mean to people and why and how they apply to the problem at hand. If we are going to address global problems such as poverty, environmental issues and war, let us not lose sight of what the "global village" looks like, how it operates, what demands it makes on people, what the stakes are and what power relations function in it If we take these into account, we can hardly come up with oversimplified, minimalist values that apply across the board.

Each of the ethical approaches that had been discussed here, seems to be fraught with problems. Many of them also seem to rely to a greater or lesser extent on their coexistence with other approaches in order to provide us with guidelines. In the next section I will attempt to look at ways in which we can try and steer clear from binary oppositions with regard to our ethical approaches, and argue instead for the interrelatedness of substantive and procedural strategies, universal concerns and particular contexts, and individual and community interests.

3.5. An attempt at a synthesis of various approaches: The Integrative Social Contracts Theory (ISCT)

Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:12) provide us with an exploration of many of the often-used, non-contractarian approaches to business ethics. They draw the conclusion that no single theory has emerged that is fully capable of providing meaningful guidelines to the wide range of challenging business ethics issues that confront us in the workplace. They evaluate Norman Bowie's attempts at applying Kantian ethics in a sophisticated manner to a myriad of business contexts. Evan and Freeman similarly worked out an elaborate Kantian-based model for stakeholder management. Rights-based approaches informed by deontological theories or theories of social justice also abound. The work of Werhane on human resource management is an example of an approach that figures under the latter category. Donaldson and Dunfee (1999:13) refer to the attempt to provide universal guidelines to business ethics questions as "the view from nowhere". Deontology rests on the assumption that one can make absolutist statements about truth and morality if only one could be reasonable or objective enough. Yet Donaldson and Dunfee (1999:28) argue that in the business world we deal with what they call "bounded rationality". That is a form of rationality that acknowledges the fact that human cognition is subject to serious physical and psychological limits, and that individuals make systematic errors in reasoning. Decisions are often made in the face of insufficient information and time constraints. In addition to this the business world is institutionally "thick", i.e. businesses are human artifacts created for specific purposes. Because the rules and structures of business can vary dramatically from culture to culture, from industry to industry and from company to company, one realizes that

universal, timeless truths are hardly going to assist us in making specific moral decisions in a real business environment. Perhaps the most intractable aspect of the "artifactual" problem in business ethics is cultural variety, which in South Africa manifests itself as one of the main problems in moral discussions.

Dunfee & Donaldson (1995:174) also evaluate consequential approaches to business ethics, where a certain end-point is postulated. The attempt to justify corporate ethics consequentially through the achievement of higher profit levels in a type of utilitarian "Ethics pays"-argument is typical of these approaches. Thee work of Aupperle, Carroll and Hatfield (1985) and the research currently being done by the Center for Business Ethics (see their web site: www.bentley.edu/cbe) on whether or not the existence of corporate ethics programs actually do affect the bottom line of the organization, all share this goal. Consequential approaches all face the difficulties involved with the bounded rationality that Donaldson and Dunfee (1999:29) speak of. One does not always have at one's disposal all the relevant facts to make precise calculations. In a volatile business environment one would be hard-pressed to make clear-cut predictions even if one had time and opportunity to gather significant fact, precisely because the cause and effect relationships in complex systems cannot always be established.

Attempts have also been made to combine both consequential and rights-based factors in lists of principles or questions to be applied by business decision-makers, as have been done by Richard de George or Laura Nash. As early as 1981 Cavanagh, Moberg and Velasquez proposed an elaborate decision model for sorting among three of the more common theoretical approaches. One has also seen the rise of the stakeholder theory as a way of combining certain normative views on the responsibility the corporation has to all its stakeholders, with an instrumental approach by which one establishes a framework for examining connections between the practice of stakeholder management and the achievement of various corporate performance goals. Others have attempted a descriptive analysis of the extent to which firms follow stakeholder management strategies and the way in which the law requires, or at least supports, such strategies (Dunfee & Donaldson 1995:175). When one has to weigh various interests against one another, the problem with

stakeholder analysis becomes apparent. It forces one to quantify and qualify the "good" for all involved in a means to an end calculation that is open to the objections raised against utilitarianism earlier in this chapter.

Dunfee and Donaldson (1995:181) argue that context-specificity in contractarian ethics may constitute the ideal source of normative standards for the actual process of stakeholder management. Contractarianism tends to be a norm-centered approach to ethics. Empirical issues abound concerning the way norms are created, communicated and accepted within particular business communities, how they change or are purged, and how they are enforced or supported. Robertson & Ross (1995:213) indicates that the integrative social contracts theory as formulated by Donaldson and Dunfee recognizes ethical obligations based on two levels of consent. In the first place, consent is based on a theoretical "macro" social contract appealing to all rational actors. Secondly, members of numerous localized communities consent to the terms of real and specific "micro" social contracts. Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:19) emphasize the hypothetical character of the "macro" contract as opposed to the non-hypothetical, actual agreements existing in the extant contract within and among communities. Macro contracts, in short, fill in what micro contracts leave out, and vice versa.

Two important concepts in understanding the essence of ISCT are that of hypernorms and moral free space. Hypernorms constitute universal limits to community consent, and are therefore recognized by the hypothetical macro-social contractors as key limits on moral free space and are essential to establishing consent in micro-social norms while recognizing precepts and values common to most people. Hypernorms constitute principles so fundamental that by definition, they serve as "second-order" norms by which other norms can be judged.

Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:51) distinguish three distinct types of hypernorms, namely procedural, structural, and substantive hypernorms. Procedural hypernorms specify the rights of exit and voice essential to support micro-social contractual consent. The right of voice for instance encompasses and extends beyond Habermas' recognition of the

substantive rules of argumentation. The right of exit prohibits coercive restrictions on egress from micro-social communities. Secondly, structural hypernorms exist that are necessary for political and social organization, for example, the right to property is supported by an economic hypernorm that obliges members of society to honor institutions that promote justice and economic welfare - within, of course the bounds of other hypernorms. Finally, substantive hypernorms specify fundamental conceptions of the right and the good. Whereas the sources of procedural and structural hypernorms are specified or implicit in the macro- or micro-social contract, Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:52) argue that the sources of substantive hypernorms are exogenous. This last assumption can be questioned, since this dissertation argues that the structural realities of institutions, as well as procedural parameters to moral discussions, are directly related to substantive beliefs about the good and vice versa. The problems caused by these complexities surface in certain of Donaldson & Dunfee's arguments. For instance, they argue that variations of hypernorms can be identified over time, but that it does not necessarily mean that the underlying set of hypernorms have changed. These changes may simply reflect changes in the methodology by which hypernorms are recognized. Methodology, however, also become substantive norms in that they prescribe preferred ways of pursuing the desired good.

Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:56) claim that they are not advocating an Esperanto of global ethics that speaks with univocal meaning to all. Rather, theirs is a form of moral minimalism [as opposed to foundationalism] that consists of principles and rules that are reiterated in different times and places, and that are seen to be similar even though they are expressed in different idioms and reflect different histories and different versions of the world. They identify certain philosophical positions and certain collective agreements that provide us with some idea of commonly accepted moral norms. Philosophically they point to the work of Hans Küng, John Kline, Richard De George, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Confucius. Collective agreements they point to include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (Towards a global ethic, 1993), Global 2000 Report from Millennium Institute (1993) and the Caux Round Table (1994). They (1999:54) do not want to claim to have found a final list, expressible in a particular moral language and valid for all moral situations, since that would

constitute a form of moral absolutism. Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:59) do not want to take a position on whether hypernorms have a purely rational basis as Kant argues, or a partially empirical and historical basis as Hegel argues. When one looks at the list they have compiled, it seems as if they are more prone to rational, hypothetical agreements, rather than to empirical and historical sources. The hypernorms are in fact abstract principles aimed at transcending specific agreements, and therefore it succumbs to the same difficulties indicated in the evaluation of Kant, Rawls, Küng and Bok earlier in this chapter. In analyzing the work of these philosophers it becomes clear that even though they claim to reach rational, impartial agreements, these agreements still serve certain power-interests, reflect certain cultural mores and presuppose certain institutional parameters.

ISCT claims to take these contextual realities into account by allowing for real micro-contracts that allow communities to arrive at their own agreements on contextual moral guidelines. Donaldson and Dunfee (1999:83) refer to the existence of a *moral free space* that acknowledges that it is right and proper for communities to self-define significant aspects of their business morality. Ethical rules develop both formally through explicit contracts, and informally through implicit agreements among groups of people. Why are these community specific norms necessary? The first reason relates to the fact that the application of general ethical rules to a specific context often becomes problematic. Secondly the enormous variety of moral preferences among individual community members and their communities cause firms, even in the same industry, to develop quite different values and traditions. Thirdly, corporations and other business organizations frequently reflect the religious or cultural attitudes of their employees or of the surrounding culture. Finally, the flexibility and openness of moral free space allows for the generation and modification of the ethical norms that are essential if organizations are to accomplish their goals efficiently (Donaldson & Dunfee 1999:84-85).

The identification of localized communities is in itself an empirical task. Dunfee & Donaldson (1995:39) describe the "community" as a self-defined, self-circumscribed group of people who interact in the context of shared tasks, values and goals and who are capable of establishing norms of ethical behavior for themselves. Individuals may belong to multiple

communities whose norms may function in any given situation. In order for a community to exist, it must pass the "self-awareness test" by which the members of a community recognize their association with the group and view it as a source of obligatory ethical norms. Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:86) refer to "authentic" ethical norms in business as those norms that are considered genuine in a community, and that actually represent a community consensus concerning parameters of ethical behavior. These norms are influenced by the ethical climate in the organization, which includes leadership, organizational structure, policies, incentive systems, decision-making and informal systems; sub-communities within the organization; and legal parameters (such as the US Corporate Sentencing Guidelines in the case of American business).

The benefits of the ISCT approach are clear: it allows communities to define their own contextual moral guidelines within the broader parameters of what is considered universally acceptable. According to Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:21) the very logic of ISCT entails tolerance. Tolerance is an extension of the emphasis on consent and choice. Therefore on the continuum of extreme relativism, cultural relativism, pluralism, modified universalism and extreme universalism (absolutism) ISCT is compatible with pluralism. It acknowledges the fact that there are broad ranges of ethical viewpoints that may be chosen by communities and cultures, and that the possibility exists that conflicting ethical positions in different cultures are equally valid. It is also pluralistic in its acceptance of many kinds of moral theories. However, it maintains that there are circumstances in which the viewpoint of a particular culture will be invalid due either to a universally binding moral precept or to the priority of the view of another culture or community (Donaldson & Dunfee 1999:23).

The ISCT approach also has its difficulties, as was shown in the above criticism on the identification of substantive hypernorms. These difficulties can be illustrated further by looking at some of the problems inherent in what Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:120) view as a structural hypernorm, namely the hypernorm of necessary social efficiency. Efficiency can be understood as a moral principle when we acknowledge that some goods may possess intrinsic worth for society, in other words, they are the goods that society pursues. If such "necessary" public goods do exist, then efficiency in pursuing them is also desirable.

Societies must therefore develop systems to pursue necessary goods and create policies, rules and procedures. A simple example of how the structural hypernorm of social efficiency can contradict some of the substantive hypernorms identified in the ISCT approach, is the issue the issue on whether or not multinationals should use cheap child-labor in third world countries. Let us assume that a particular third world country has high levels of unemployment and that many families are living below the breadline. Let us assume that social efficiency in their context demands that all the family-members that can succeed in finding a job must contribute to the household. One of the substantive hypernorms identified by Donaldson & Dunfee (1999:70) is: "Every human being must be treated humanely". Let us say that at the level of the micro-contract the local community finds it completely acceptable, in fact desirable, for their children to work from an early age. Now in terms of the social efficiency principle the children should be allowed to work - it makes business sense and it makes sense in terms of community survival. However, the substantive hypernorm would raise issues as to whether or not it is humane for children to work and how those children who do choose to work are to be treated. In various cultures it is not considered inhumane for children to do hard manual labor under difficult conditions from an early age. Furthermore, it serves the purpose of social efficiency - the company gets to produce its goods at a low cost and the families in the third world country gets to survive another day. Are we satisfied with this conclusion, or does our reference to hypernorms leave us with many unanswered questions? These are questions that can in fact only be answered from a very contextual, historical perspective.

3.6. Possible solutions

In order to address some of the problems of these approaches, a few important issues need to be addressed. In the first place, it seems as if a crucial problem inherent to many of these moral theories is that it either overemphasizes substance and content over just procedure and meaningful moral reasoning, or overemphasizes procedure whilst paying too little attention to the meaning(s) of the good that these procedures embody. A second problem is the tendency to either over generalize and universalize, or to individualize and particularize up to the point of fragmentation. A third problem, closely related to the

second pertains to the relationship between the individual and the group and the way moral goods are determined within these structures or institutions.

3.6.1. Substantive versus procedural:

When we look at the first problem, it seems as though one cannot get away from the fact that all moral theories attempt to distinguish certain moral goods that are supposedly more moral, worthier and more rational than others. This seems inevitable when discussing morality, since morality is all about choosing certain beliefs and actions and rejecting others in our efforts to consider the interests of all the parties involved in the moral issue. Yet because of the fact that each moral dilemma constitutes unique challenges for adjudicating the interests of all involved, some moral theories hold that it is more effective to prescribe certain procedures for reaching moral decisions than to prescribe distinct goods. However, all attempts to develop such procedures seem to make certain assumptions as to what will constitute the good.

In the Kantian sense, what is good is seen as those decisions that were made impartially, objectively, autonomously, and that can apply generally. Yet, as many feminists have already indicated, not all people believe that it is good to be impartial, detached, and objective and to make general statements instead of very specific and particular ones. In Kant's rational procedure, substantive goods are already indicated as valuable and others are demoted as unworthy of moral status. In fact, Kant seems to hold certain contradictory principles in high esteem, which necessitates a procedure to adjudicate between the conflicting goods. Ricoeur (1992:208) argues that Rawls' distributive justice is in fact an attempt to find a procedure that would give equal expression to Kantian principles that are in fact not easily compatible. Kant's principle of the autonomy of each individual and the principle of the respect each individual deserves as an end in itself cannot always easily be realized institutionally, precisely because people who deserve equal respect are in fact not always equal with respect to talents, means, dedication, position in society etc. That is why some procedure is necessary to find an optimum form of realization of principles within contextual restraints. Yet, procedure cannot function independent of concern for certain

"goods". Van der Ven (1998:168) indicate that Rawls' distinction between natural and social primary goods in his discussion on what constitutes basic liberty shows that there can be no "pure" procedural contractualism. Procedural contractualism cannot do without a substantive approach, because procedural justice cannot avoid making decisions at some stage or another about what constitutes the "good". The substantial sense of justice cannot be perfectly transformed into the procedural rule of justice on which the social contract relies. As Van der Ven (1998:169) puts it: "Substance transcends procedure, procedure does not correspond to the fullness of substance. Ultimately, procedure is negative, it can indicate only what should not be done, not what should be done."

Are we to conclude that all procedural theories are invalid or useless? No, this would be to assume that one should allow any reasoning to count as moral as long as it prescribes a certain good. This would be to give the substantive priority and could result in complete relativity as to what constitutes the good. This relativism could result in extreme individualism that holds that every one person decides what is good in any given situation. It could also result in strong communalism where the good is determined by what the most people in the community consider good. In effect this would construct a metanarrative of the good that would disallow moral dissensus and is sure to discriminate against certain individuals who hold a conception of the good that differs from that of the majority.

Metanarratives or "grand narratives" can be seen as attempts to subject reality to a comprehensive set of substantive categories on what constitutes the good for everyone involved and to prescribe a matching procedure to its attainment. In the context of morality this means that certain moral strategies, based on certain conceptions of the good can function as a grand narrative that explain all moral decisions, and prescribe certain moral actions in terms of procedures. This boils down to a quick fix by which one considers only one conception of the good legitimate and eliminates all other goods or concerns. When this happens morality runs the risk of functioning as legitimizing narratives for the protection of certain power interests, and closing off a certain subjectivist interpretation of how things are and how things should be. If other narratives cannot challenge this narrative, it could easily become a way to legitimize the existing power configurations, and

discriminate against those who would not benefit from the existing view of the good. In Lyotard's works, *"The Inhuman"* (1991) and *"The Postmodern Explained"* (1992), it becomes clear that this will to power so inherent to human beings is where immorality and, in Lyotard's terms, "inhumanity" starts. He argues that the human subject's desire to control by making everything representable undermines the true humanity of the human race. Lyotard does not pretend that we can survive without any narratives, since narratives are our way of making sense of our lives and our relationships. He only urges that we should never allow any one narrative to become a subjectivist prison from which no escape towards transcendence of our current structures of meaning is possible. We should allow the plurality of narratives to challenge and shape one another, even if this causes a certain measure of uncertainty. True humanity only becomes possible if we allow ourselves to be confronted by the "inhuman", or in other words, that which transcends us. Lyotard (1991:98) will argue that this uncertainty constitutes the essence of true humanity, since it indicates an awareness of something bigger and greater than our own attempts at meaning and representation

What we need is a certain view of moral reasoning that acknowledges that any choice with regard to procedure also makes certain statements about the good. The procedure must be such that the various perspectives on what constitutes good can be identified, formulated but also renegotiated as part of the ongoing moral discourse. Falzon (1998:62) describes a form of openness that allows a process of dialogical ethics to take place. The attitude of openness does not oppose all forms of order, or organizational activity, but rather the absolutization of particular forms of order, and the establishment of fixed states of closure and domination. In opposing totalization and promoting resistance, the attitude of openness opens up the possibility of the modification of prevailing principles and forms of life, as well as their transformation and renewal through ongoing dialogue. Being open to the other is not to be understood as an ideal state, something that we can attain once and for all; rather it is an ongoing task. This "ethics of the other" that Falzon (1998:63) speaks of have been invoked by many recent thinkers under many different names. Derrida's "hierarchical violence" of Western reason, invokes as a motivating impulse of deconstruction the idea of an ethical responsibility to affirm the otherness of the other, to postpone final

closure of meaning and significance and to open the space for "the other" to arrive in. The possibilities inherent in Derrida's strategy of deconstruction will be explored in terms of its benefits in a pluralist organizational context in Chapter 4. Postmodern feminists have alluded to the idea of an ethics of care that had been referred to earlier. It attempts to exercise care towards the other by holding open the intersubjective space in which difference can unfold in its particularity (Falzon 1998:63).

3.6.2. Universal versus particular

Van der Ven (1998: 172-176) gives an expose of Ricoeur's analysis of the search for the good, the just and the wise that helps us understand why overemphasizing either the universal or the particular is undesirable in moral reasoning. Within each of three stages he identifies there are three dimensions: the relation to oneself, the relation to the other, and the relation to the whole of society. In the first stage, the emphasis is on the teleological search for the good life in personal, interpersonal and institutional settings. In the second phase the good is tested from a deontological perspective that emphasizes rationalization, formalization and universalization. The good is assessed to determine whether it can be justified in rational terms. Three groups of criteria is important: autonomy in personal life, respect for others in interpersonal life, and procedural justice in democratic institutional life. In the third stage the good that had been discovered in the first stage, and tested in the second stage, must be applied in the concrete situation. It is a combination of activity and passivity that requires Aristotelian *phronesis*, practical wisdom, or "judgment in the situation" as Ricoeur calls it. This third stage requires the higher ability of synthesis that allows one to compose one's vision and formulate one's own judgment about the situation in its singularity. It is therefore not enough to identify certain goods and to critically test them; one should also be able to relate any beliefs and values to the specific situation at hand.

What is in fact called for in the stage of the wise, is that the meaning of a universal value such as justice be negotiated *in* the particular situation. This not only eliminates the abuse of the use of universal values such as justice in the interest of certain groups, it also

incorporates into the substantive content of justice elements of care and compassion for everyone involved. Universal values become the procedural parameters that create the space for negotiation of substantive contents that is always contingent, always evolving and therefore always renegotiable and dynamic. The meaning of the universal is therefore always deferred and postponed. However, the fact that it can never be decided upon or fixed for eternity does not mean that it should not be discussed. It in effect sets the agenda for moral discourse, it indicates concerns that have to be taken into account.

Solomon (1997:155) suggests this interaction between justice and care in the business world by indicating the central importance of care and compassion in the context of the central managerial virtue of justice. Justice as fairness holds institutions together and it is the virtue of fairness that above all, marks a good manager. Fairness does not imply the application of certain abstract and impersonal principles, although administrative equity is never completely beside the point. Neither is fairness merely the respect for employee or other stakeholders' rights. "Rights" normally enter the picture when the harmony of communities have broken down in order to determine legitimate demands rather than cooperative or mutually formulated decisions. Justice is first of all an attitude of caring, a sense of compassion for those in a less advantageous position, a relationship, and only secondly a matter of rights, equality or merit. Unfortunately, the free market tends to say very little about this conception of justice, because it is in the very nature of the market to reduce people to consumers or commodities, human dignity to a market value and personal worth to a salary (Solomon 1997:156).

In my view free market rationalism does precisely what is so problematic in deontology: it formulates certain rules that set as highest value certain goods and generalize about the rest, trusting that the procedure will somehow distribute the good to all because of the inherent justice of the system and its rules. Yet, people do not fit into these abstract categories of contractual obligations and rights and the universal rules of the system do not take care of particular individuals and specific problematic situations. The problem is, some universal value does not always trump particular concerns, in fact the universal value has no content without the specific goods that society is striving for. In this sense teleology and

deontology are dependent upon one another. As Ricoeur (1992:190) explains, we don't have some abstract "obligation" to adhere to certain principles. He maintains that it is possible to dig under the level of obligation to discover some ethical sense about why certain things are considered "good" in terms of the interests of all involved. Those goals that society see as necessary for the "good life" in the society, organization or social institutions that they are involved in, determine the content of the universal value of justice in that specific context. This does not mean, however, that using universal concerns for justice, peace, welfare etc as parameters for discussion is not useful. They can be helpful as long as they allow the actual individuals influenced by these discussions to come face to face with each other. The details of how one should approach other people in this way will be developed in Chapter 4 by referring to Levinas' discussion of the face of the other.

3.6.3. Individual versus community

Another problem with most moral theories is that they cannot seem to find a meaningful interaction between the individual moral agent, the community that he/ she is part of and the institutions in which he/ she participates. The individualized free agent of transcendental philosophy had fallen into disrepute, yet it is also not true that individuals are mere puppets of the communities or institutions in which they live and work. The communitarian solution rests on the important assumption that a homogenous moral community at local level is possible. Within the South African working environment this is unlikely. Communitarianism also considers community life and living in the community as an unquestionable end. This overemphasis on the community as end has contributed to grave injustices in South Africa. The protection of distinct group identities was pursued as an unquestionable end, undermining not only individual rights and freedom but also the integrity and rights of other groups. Because of the fact that communities and institutions do have a great influence on moral decision-making, as was indicated in Chapter 2, it will also not be helpful to deny the importance of communities and institutions when developing a moral theory. The communitarian's observation with regard to the links that exist between narrative, community and ethics should therefore be taken seriously, yet not at the expense

of the individual's freedom to associate and to co-define and redefine the terms of the association.

Zygmunt Bauman (1994) describes both individualism and communalism as part of the reason why it becomes so difficult to speak of morality in any meaningful sense. In the first place, Bauman (1994:22) speaks of the privatization of common fates, where individuals live separately side by side. It is a privatized world in which people may share space, but not thoughts and sentiments, and where they are acutely aware of the fact that they no longer necessarily share fates either. The most common strategy individuals use to avoid moral responsibility is to claim that they need space. The "I need space" strategy militates against any moral sense, since it denies the moral significance of even the most intimate inter-human action. It exempts core elements of human inter-relationships from moral evaluation and neutralizes even those aspects of human existence falling outside the already neutralized world of public bureaucracy and institutions. A vicious circle develops, through which an increasingly privatized life feeds disinterest in politics, and politics, freed from constraints, deepens the extent of privatization, thus breeding more indifference (Bauman 1994:27). This disinterest extends to other institutionalized spheres such as that of business in that the individual's relationship with her/ his workplace is defined by the way in which having a career or a job serves her/ his private interests, and where creating common value-systems in the workplace is not high on the individual's priority list. In fact, it becomes very hard to argue for the value that any sense of community boundaries might have for the individual, since it merely limits his/ her freedom and encroaches on his/ her space.

Bauman (1994:30) however makes it clear that a sense of community is unlikely to fill the moral gap with some content. The overall effect merely continues the tendency to expropriate the individual's moral responsibility. It is now the community who defines good from evil, and who dictate the definition of moral conduct. The most important concern of the moral legislation of communities is to keep the division between us and them watertight; not so much to promote moral standards, as to install double standards according to which the own can be treated in different terms from the other. Because the community replaces

the torments of moral responsibility with the certainty of discipline and submission, disciplined selves are by no means guaranteed to be moral, nor do they necessarily promote the cultivation of moral selves (Bauman 1994:33). In fact, the history of Apartheid in South Africa illustrate what Bauman (1994:34) describes as the process through which *"submissive selves can easily be deployed - and are deployed - in the service of the cruel mindless inhumanity of the endless (and hopeless) intercommunal wars of attrition and boundary skirmishes."*

In an attempt to overcome the dangers inherent to an overemphasis on either the individual or environment (social, cultural, institutional), Van der Ven (1998:29) advocates what he calls an interactionalist approach that rejects both personal and environmental determinism. Interactionalism is an attempt at synthesizing the paradigms of individualism, communitarianism, and institutionalism by placing the emphasis on reciprocal interactions between individual, community, and society. Personal determinism holds that all processes in moral life stem from the individual's cognition, emotions, motives, intentions and choices, while neglecting the influences of environmental factors. Environmental determinism is the proposition that all moral thinking, feeling, striving and behaving are controlled by external stimuli operating in the environment. From the interactionalist perspective, the individual is counteractive but also proactive, and not only does the environment influence the individual, but the individual also orchestrates, conducts, and even create the environment. Interactionalism has both a structural and a process aspect. The structural aspect is characterized by the interdependence of personal and environmental factors. The process side of interactionalism is revealed when one studies this structure over time and it becomes clear that human functioning causes interaction that itself influences interaction in future. This gives interactionalism a dynamic aspect over time.

Solomon (1997:150) envisions a business corporation that supports the interaction between the individual and the institution. Corporations have been described either as a legal fiction, an artificial person whose only reason for existence is to make money and protect the owners or the stockholders, or it has been described in terms of the military metaphor of a hierarchical chain of command whose primary purpose is to beat the competition. The latter

leads to ruthlessness, hostility, bloodletting and often mutual destructiveness, and the former to corporate irresponsibility and social unresponsiveness as well as to endless debates about the alleged social responsibilities of organizations as defined solely in terms of their fiduciary obligations. Solomon (1997:151) proposes that a corporation should instead be seen as a community, a group of people working together for (more or less) shared goals and with some sense of a shared culture. The distinguishing factor in this view of the corporation is the fact that it is first and foremost a group of people who stand with each other in a variety of personal and professional relationships.

In the corporation, individuals working in a corporation are defined to a large extent by the role they play within the organization - "the individual-in-the-organization". However, this does not mean that the individual's individuality is denied. Each individual is treated as a full-fledged human being, and not as a mere means to an end. Yet, what constitute their interaction are the shared goals and purposes for the sake of which they engage with each other in the workplace. They determine what the terms and parameters of the engagement are in terms of what they are willing to put into the interaction and what they want to get out of it. However, the terms and parameters of this interaction in turn determine them in their everyday lives, their beliefs and their actions. The individual is thus at the same time subject and object in interaction with the organizational structure he or she associates with.

3.7. Conclusion:

This chapter contends that in order to deal with moral dilemmas in a pluralistic environment, one should refrain from devising abstract and universal solutions. A context-specific solution should be found for each dilemma. This solution should attempt to balance substantive and procedural considerations, and recognize the interaction between the two. Furthermore, it should translate universal guidelines to particular, individualized options. In this process, the individual and his or her specific identity-configurations, as well as his or her specific context, should be acknowledged. At the same time though, the interaction of the individual with groups, and the maintenance of unity amidst diversity should remain a

firm priority. In the process of accomplishing this delicate balance, rejecting the available ethical approaches described above or resorting to yet another attempt at combining them in a new synthesis, will not suffice. New perspectives and creative options need to be explored. Chapter 4 will serve exactly this purpose.

Chapter 4: Twentieth century philosophical clues towards moral strategies

4.1. Background:

When we look at the history of philosophical developments in the twentieth century, we find many clues as to what constituted the agenda of these philosophers who were grappling with the disappointments of the war, genocide, poverty and environmental crises of the last century of the 2nd millennium. When we try and grasp this agenda in terms of broad strands of ideas, we find the following themes recurring in the works of many philosophers: antifoundationalism, anti-essentialism, nonrepresentational theories of truth, as well as antidualist and antimetaphysical conceptions of reality. Somehow, the philosophers of the twentieth century became disillusioned with the metaphysical dualisms that the Western philosophical tradition inherited from the Greeks. For instance, Rorty (1999:47) identifies the following dualisms: those between essence and accident, substance and property, and appearance and reality. Many of the philosophers of the twentieth century realized that our perception of the world is not constructed with the aid of these Greek oppositions, instead it is the result of a flux of continually changing relations.

The immutable "foundations" initially provided by metaphysics and later on by objective reason were crumbling under the feet of the twentieth century philosophers. Wittgenstein indicated in his later work that language does not represent reality but rather engages us in language-games by which we develop ever-changing conceptions of reality in relation to each other and to changing circumstances. Poststructuralism forever changed our reliance on language structures. No longer were language structures thought to contain any definite meaning and we had to resign ourselves to accepting the ever-deferring character of meaning as developed in Derrida's strategy of deconstruction and his conception of *differance*. Kuhn's paradigm theory indicated the dependence of seemingly solid scientific theory on arbitrary hypothesis ever open to refutation or reversal in the light of new insights or unprecedented problems. And when we thought that this process at least guaranteed the linear progress of science towards objective truth, which was also brought into question with pragmatism's assertion that we can no longer see truth as having any

strict correspondence to reality. Rather, according to the two slogans of the pragmatists, "everything is a social construction" and "all awareness is a linguistic affair". Because our linguistic practices are so bound up with our social practices, our descriptions of reality will always be a function of our social needs (Rorty 1999:48).

Twentieth century philosophers spent a lot of time discussing the Kantian legacy of dualisms. This legacy includes: immanent versus transcendent, individual or particular versus universal, transient versus permanent and fact versus value. Somehow it was no longer a consolation to us human beings to believe that even though we can never completely reach the transcendental, universal reality, at least postulating it makes us different from the rest of the phenomenal world in which other animals live and where everything is indeed relative, pragmatic and material. As we saw in the previous chapter, the problem with accepting dualisms or trying to rehabilitate them by providing them with a different content or slant, lies in the fact that they do not seem to provide us with solutions to our twentieth century realities of particularity, constant change, complexity and ambiguity. It no longer makes sense to hang on to something non-relational because it is an unconditional, universal, necessary, a priori truth. When one is confronted with the reality of language developing in relation to other terms and relationships, when one realizes that science is in fact socially constructed and that people's perspectives on moral truths and guidelines develop differently in different societies and contexts, searching for universal, a priori truths no longer seems plausible.

Does this lead us towards complete relativism? Does this rule out morality as we understand it and imply that all of us will resort to self-interest? Does it mean that society will self-destruct because appeals to absolute truth and absolute value are no longer possible? Is this indeed the Armageddon that many postmodernists, pragmatists, existentialists, poststructuralists and process philosophers were warned about? Is this necessarily the end result of attempts to be serious about the limits of language, and the relational and historical character of truth? Can we avoid the confining character of essentialism and the metaphysical character of dualisms without resorting to an "anything goes" attitude?

I believe that one of the main reasons why many of our modern tools for dealing with moral decision-making in the workplace have become blunt, lies in the fact that modernity led us to believe that we can reason away difference and conflict by just being objective, impartial and reasonable enough. The disappointing reality of the twentieth century's wars and genocide, is that "reasonability" is always fraught with power interests, that objectivity is the pretence of a subject with a face and body, a history, and a set of interests and that impartiality is the discriminatory exercise by which the interest of certain others are excluded for the benefit of our own interests. As May (1993:71) indicates, the foundations of much of our knowledge, are bound to a project which is at least as political as it is epistemological.

Modernity, according to Bauman (1993:8) is about conflict-resolution, and it admits no contradictions except conflicts amenable to, or awaiting resolution. The twin banners of modern ethical thought can be described as *universality* and *foundations*. I would like to describe it as a pyramid knowledge structure, in which the content of truth is either defined by the tip of the pyramid or by its broad foundations. Thus one can either opt to apply the abstract universal principles top-down to the situation at hand, or one might choose to find certain basic, universal truths that ground all moral decision-making. It comes down to the same process - by means of impartial reasoning processes, the solution to the moral dilemma at hand will become clear. Universality has been defined as a feature of ethical prescriptions that compels every human creature, just for the fact of being a human creature, to recognize it as right and thus accept it as obligatory.

Bauman (1993:8) argues that modern ethical thought operates in co-operation with modern legislative practice. In the practice of legislators, universality stood for the exceptionless rule of one set of laws on the territory over which sovereignty extended and foundations stood for the coercive powers of the state that rendered obedience to the rules a sensible expectation. For philosophers and ethicists, rules would be well founded when the persons expected to follow them believed, or could be convinced, that for one reason or another following them would be the right thing to do. Bauman (1993:9) indicates that the persevering and unyielding search for rules that 'will stick' and foundations that 'won't

shake' drew its animus from the faith in the feasibility and ultimate triumph of the humanist project. Modern thought and the practice of modernity were animated by the belief in the possibility of a non-ambivalent, non-aporetic ethical code. It has not been found yet, but modernity seems to believe that it lies around the corner, or the corner after the next one, or the corners of the next millennium. Could it be that the earnest efforts of modernity have been misguided and that what we are experiencing as continued failures of moral nerve is in fact indications of the vanity of modern hopes. Bauman (1993:10) seems to come to the conclusion that a foolproof, universal and unshakably founded ethical code will never be found. In fact, it can be argued that a non-aporetic, non-ambivalent morality is a practical impossibility - perhaps also an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms.

In my view, the marks of the moral condition as we experience it at the beginning of the 21st century are well described by Bauman (1993:11-14). In the first place, it seems impossible to establish whether human are either essentially good or essentially evil. They are, in fact, morally ambivalent: ambivalence resides in the heart of the human face-to-face encounter. Therefore no logically coherent ethical code can 'fit' the essentially ambivalent condition of morality and no rational procedure can 'override' moral impulse. At best one can hope to silence and paralyze certain ambivalent impulses, thereby increasing the odds for moral conduct. But there are no guarantees, no certainties, and no room for clear-cut predictions. In the second place moral phenomena are inherently 'non-rational' in that they normally do not fit the means-end scheme. According to Bauman (1993:11) moral phenomena are only moral if they precede the consideration of gains and losses, they are not supposed to be driven by considerations of mere utility. Therefore they are not regular, repetitive, predictable, monotonous and predictable in a way that would allow us to view them as rule-guided. In the third place, morality according to Bauman (1993:11) is incurably aporetic. Since the majority of moral choices are made between contradictory impulses, few choices are unambiguously good.

Although Bauman (1993:12) makes it very clear that he does not want to embrace relativism, he believes that morality is not universalizable. This does not mean that morality is merely a

local and temporary custom. By saying that morality is un-universalizable, Bauman (1993:12) is opposing certain dangers inherent in making universal claims. As he explains it, he is opposing: *"a concrete version of moral universalism which in the modern era served as but a thinly disguised declaration of intent to embark on Gleichshaltung, on an arduous campaign to smother the differences and above all to eliminate all 'wild' - autonomous, obstreperous and uncontrolled - sources of moral judgment."* Modern thought acknowledges the present diversity of moral beliefs and institutionally promoted actions and the variety of moral postures, yet sees it as an abomination and a challenge that should be overcome. In the process the autonomous responsibility of the moral self is silenced, because it is substituted with heteronymous, enforced-from-outside, ethical rules. The effect of this approach is not so much the universalizing of morality, as the silencing of certain moral impulses in concrete situations.

Modernity's emphasis on conflict-resolution and control often causes it to set the agenda for moral discussions in terms of its own logic and content. It assumes certain concerns and strategies to be universal, yet it in fact serves specific interests. Examples of this can be found in situations where the basic elements of what was considered rational above all doubt had been accused of being ethnocentric, imperialist and inhibiting in character. For instance, feminists have argued that excluding emotion, intuition and experience from what is considered "rational" devalues the inputs and contributions of women (and certain "sensitive" males!) from the workplace, which leads to discrimination. Furthermore, it distinctly impoverishes the moral decision-making in the workplace because it eliminates a big chunk of reality from the agenda. In the North-South debate about sustainable development and the environment, the ethnocentric nature of Western rationalities have been criticized. What is considered a rational, effective approach seems to reflect certain power interests. Where Western rationality puts the blame on Africa for not being ecologically aware, Africans feel that the Western consumption culture is the main culprit. In fact, it seems as if there is not even consensus about the agenda of what should be reasonably discussed. Even the way in which "development" is discussed reflects only the northern point of view. It assumes that economies that maintain the high level of consumption of the North are the norm to which the South should aspire. It seems as if

the West's modern goals of progress, control and comprehensiveness set an agenda that by no means stand fast in all contexts.

Does morality without foundations necessarily result in flux? I believe this need not be the case. Meaningful discussions on morality does in fact become much more likely in a conversation where the content of values are not assumed, and where misunderstanding about values that may previously have been considered "universal truths" can be avoided by specific, contextual examples and strategies. It is important to note that accepting the fact that morality does not operate unambiguously according to universal rules, does not lead to moral relativism. Rather than advocating an "anything goes" approach one becomes aware of the fact that all ethical codes and moral practices are rooted in specific contexts, spheres of life, and power-interests. Modern societies practiced moral parochialism under the mask of promoting universal ethics. By exposing the essential incongruity between any power-assisted ethical code on the one hand, and the infinitely complex condition of the moral self on the other, the falsity of society's pretence to be the sole author and guardian of morality is exposed. In this way the individual's moral conscience comes into play, and real moral discussion becomes possible. How to bring the individual to put her/ his moral values in play in the discussion, how to tie this complex moral self to organizational concern, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In developing a philosophical perspective on an alternative approach to dealing with morality in the workplace, I am going to suggest that we use the insights of the twentieth century philosophers in exactly the eclectic way that most of them suggest we go about developing truth. Only, we are taking them seriously in admitting that we will probably not find THE truth, since that would be to assert that these new perspectives constitute the "objective", or "true" way. No, we are merely going to look for insights useful for a specific context, and a specific range of problems. We will take a look at what various theories offer in terms of addressing the unique challenges of the pluralist working environment. We will make a unique mix without using any one recipe. In terms of another metaphor, we take a kaleidoscopic glance at the possibilities of mixing up various disciplines and various sciences, deconstructing the barriers between insights from "scientific" facts and "historical" values, playing around with the relationships between that which only appears to be true and what

system. In contrast to the earlier Hegel, who as "existential" thinker never lost sight of the tensions and contradictions of concrete experience, Hegel's reduction of objectivity to subjectivity attempts to dissolve these tensions and ambiguities. This is done by "decoding" experience through the interpretation of the world of space and time as objective manifestation of absolute subjectivity (Taylor 1987:63).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as much as he was attracted by the work of the earlier Hegel, maintained that the totalizing consciousness of Hegel's later work is presumptuous. Merleau-Ponty aimed his "nonphilosophical" critique of modern philosophy at subverting the constructive subject by exposing the errors and dangers of its presumptuousness. Merleau-Ponty indicates how a logically consistent transcendental idealism strips the world of its opacity and its transcendence. To Merleau-Ponty, the birth of eternally constructive subjectivity is the death of the passionate temporal subject. Eternity, understood as the power to embrace and anticipate temporal developments in a single intention, becomes the very definition of subjectivity. Yet the philosopher who claims to know universal truth forgets the inescapable non-knowledge from which his/her reflection necessarily departs. This experience that nurtures reflection cannot itself be known. Since the thinker is always "thrown into" a de facto situation, the search for the conditions of possibility is in principle posterior to an actual experience. The reflective subject claiming to be the creative source or origin of the world of experience is called a "parasite" by Merleau-Ponty, since it is nourished by experience more "originary" than its own deeds.

The irreducible temporality of subjectivity "decenters" self-consciousness in yet another way because *time* enters reflection. The achievement of self-consciousness takes time because of the inevitable delay between the constituting act of consciousness and the return of the constructive subject to itself through the process of recollection. The result of this delay is that the consummation of the union between subjectivity and objectivity remains a dream whose realization is perpetually "deferred" (Taylor 1987:68). The reflective subject attempts to close in on itself by incorporating every other and assimilating all difference. In contrast, the living body resists closure and necessarily remains open to what is other than and different from itself. This "holey-ness" and

"gappiness" causes the living body to be indefinable in terms of binary oppositions that structure conceptual reflection, such as that of subject or object. The body is neither subject nor object, but rather the mean between extremes - the milieu in which subjectivity and objectivity, interiority and exteriority intersect.

While the reflective philosopher, attempts to cast his/her eagle eye across the world to bring everything to light, the non-philosopher invokes an elusive and elliptical style to evoke carnality. As such, it embraces Heidegger's conception of the body as "dark hole" that makes light possible. Irreducible darkness is, paradoxically, the lighting necessary for the play of differences that constitutes spatial and temporal experience. The non-philosopher can apprehend this play of differences in the body, even though it will still remain impossible to comprehend it. "Flesh" as this "formative milieu" of subjectivity and objectivity is not limited to a particular genre of existence. Rather, the world is universal flesh - a network of relations, in which everything is intertwined and interlaced. Merleau-Ponty indicates how seemingly "objective" realities such as color is in fact yet another variant in another dimension of variation - that of its relations with its surroundings [recent scientific evidence for this will be presented later on in this chapter]. The fact that the "flesh of things" is the invisible interplay of differences that articulates the difference necessary for identity does not end in chaos, but rather in texture. Merleau-Ponty makes it clear that flesh is not a contingency or chaos, instead the interweaving of universal flesh produces a "texture" (*textere: to weave*) that forms the tissue or fabric of the visible which interlaces all things (Taylor 1987:73).

Merleau-Ponty extends this analysis to the use of language, and argues that language is a relational network in which "there are only differences between signifiers". This play of differences is not only created by a individual speaker or speakers. I am able to speak only because language speaks in and through me. In explaining the working of the "savage word", Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that the individual is not the organizer of language, rather words would combine through him by virtue of the neural intertwining of their meaning, through the "occult traffic of metaphor" (Taylor 1987:74). The "Logos" that Merleau-Ponty speaks of is not a transcendent ideality, but has its concrete embodiment in the sensible world with

which it is inseparably intertwined. In this sense the word is always already incarnate. This carnal *logos* is nothing other than the interlacing of flesh, and therefore veils as much as it unveils.

Merleau-Ponty argues that in order to avoid the presumptuousness of the reflective philosophers, it is necessary to return to the obscurity, ambiguity and contradictions of concrete temporal experience. He suggests that we turn "reflection" into "hyperreflection" [*surreflexion*]. The idea behind hyperreflection is that it does not assimilate the "transcendence" of the world within its own immanent activity. Transcendence, in this context, refers to nothing otherworldly, but designates the brute givenness or facticity of the world as such. Hyperdialectic is described by Merleau-Ponty as a thought that is capable of reaching truth because it envisages without restriction the plurality of relationships and what has been called ambiguity. Synthesis is impossible because existence remains open-ended (Taylor 1987:79).

The ideas of Merleau-Ponty, and as we shall soon discover, that of Levinas and Derrida sound strange and abstract to the ears of our generation who have for the most part grown up believing in the powers of the self-conscious and the self-governing individual subject. In fact, we have a whole range of modernist beliefs engrained into the way we perceive the world and ourselves and the strategies we have for coping with the problems that we face in reality. In fact, this epistemology which is the end-result of the enlightenment, is a solid pyramid of foundationalist truths that not only provide us with explanational tools with which to analyze, explain and predict behavior, but also with the security of having access to so-called self-evident truths. The elements of the foundationalist epistemological pyramid support one another in such a way that one cannot really tamper with any one aspect of it without having the whole epistemology come apart. And that is precisely what happened when developments in cognitive science, linguistics and quantum mechanics started to undermine the most basic premises of foundationalist epistemology. By the mid- to late 1970's, a body of empirical evidence began to emerge that called into question the fundamental tenets of Anglo-American cognitivism. Up to then reason was viewed as disembodied and literal, assuming a strict dualism between the mind and body, in which the

mind was characterized in terms of its formal functions such as formal logic or the manipulation of a system of signs, independent of the body. However, two kinds of evidence drew this into question: firstly, the strong dependence of concepts and reason upon the body and secondly, the centrality to conceptualization and reason of imaginative processes, especially metaphor, metonomy, imagery, prototypes, frames, mental spaces and radial categories (Lakoff & Johnson 1999:77).

Lakoff & Johnson (1999:77) indicate that an embodied view of the mind emerged which challenged the disembodied view of reason to its core, by establishing the following:

- Conceptual structure arises from sensorimotor experience and the neural structures that give rise to it. Therefore our notions of structure, or category, is very much the result of our body's sensory reaction to challenges it encounters. We are neural beings, living organisms that must exclude certain things and include others to physically survive. Categorization is, for the most part, not a product of conscious reasoning, but rather the result of the brains and bodies that we have and the way in which we interact with the world (Lakoff & Johnson 1999:18).
- Mental structures are not meaningless symbols, but are intrinsically meaningful by virtue of their connection to our bodies and our embodied experience.
- Our capabilities for gestalt perception and image formation as well as our motor schemas give rise to "basic level" concepts that in turn give rise to primary metaphors which allows us to conceptualize abstract concepts on the basis of inferential patterns used in sensorimotor processes that are directly tied to the body.
- Reason is embodied, since our fundamental forms of inference arise from sensorimotor and other body-based forms of inference.
- Furthermore, reason is imaginative in that inference forms are mapped onto abstract modes of inference by metaphor.
- The result of this is that conceptual systems are pluralistic, not monolithic and therefore most concepts are defined by multiple conceptual metaphors, which are often inconsistent with each other. As Lakoff and Johnson (1999:73) explain, our most important abstract concepts, from love to causation to morality, are   .

conceptualized via multiple complex metaphors which are an essential part of these concepts. Without these metaphors the concepts are skeletal and have no conceptual or inferential structure.

If we therefore want to understand how morality operates in the workplace, we have to acknowledge both the embodied and imaginative character of our moral awareness. Our thinking about what is moral does not only rely on our very basic sensorimotor system and the way that it makes us respond to situations, but also on the imaginative construction of metaphors that enable us to make sense of the situation at hand. This view of the embodied character of our moral awareness is collaborated by Petersen's (1999:40) descriptions of the "silent patrons of our hearts" that may help us produce and evaluate multiple fleeting sketches of possible decisions and actions, before we consciously reason about what to do. He agrees with Lakoff and Johnson's view that somatic markers developed by the process of biological and social evolution pre-selects responses before we engage in conscious reasoning. Somatic markers represent a more sophisticated version of what we call a "gut-feeling". Petersen (1999:42) argues that many diverse experiences such as displeasure, acceptance, punishment and praise may lead to the creation of somatic markers that are activated before and during our reasoning process. I argued, in my analysis of Olafson's insights in Mitsein, that we develop our moral conceptions because of the interactions with others and with the world that depend on positive or negative feedback, thereby forming subconscious as well as conscious moral dispositions. In trying to create a moral culture in the workplace, these aspects have to be taken into account. They can in fact provide us with imaginative alternatives in our value-creation programs, as will be illustrated in Chapter 5.

Acknowledging the embodied character of reason however has further epistemological implications. Firstly, it undermines the classical philosophical view of scientific realism. Disembodied objective scientific realism makes the following claims: Firstly, there is a world independent of our understanding of it that we can have stable knowledge of, and secondly our very concepts and forms of reason are characterized by the external world itself and not by our bodies and brains. These assumptions support the subject-object dichotomy that so many twentieth century philosophers struggle with. Lakoff and Johnson

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(1999:97) indicate the importance of philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty and Dewey in grappling with this problem. Both these philosophers argue that mind and body are not separate metaphysical entities. In fact, when we use the words mind and body we are imposing bounded conceptual structures artificially on the ongoing integrated process that constitutes our experience. The result of a strict subject-object dichotomy is that there are only two possible, equally erroneous, conceptions of objectivity. Objectivity is either given by the things themselves (the objects) or by intersubjective structures of consciousness shared by all people (the subject). When we look at the moral theories discussed in the previous chapter it becomes clear that all of them either appeal to some self-evident truths provided by reality itself and accessible through rationality (such as Kantianism) or to some intersubjective agreement on what constitutes common truth. The dangers of both these extremes were highlighted in the previous chapter. The problem underlying both approaches is that the dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity remains unbreached. The solution that Lakoff and Johnson (1999:93) propose is that of embodied realism, which relies on the fact that we are coupled to the world through our embodied interactions. Our directly embodied concepts can reliably fit those embodied interactions and the understandings of the world that arise from them.

The disintegration of the foundationalist epistemology, brings up another, related question, namely, how does one go about establishing meaningful truth? As post-Kuhnians, we know that there are no pure observation sentences from which a scientific theory can be arrived at through induction. There can be no assumption-free scientific observation. But does this mean that there can be no stable scientific truths at all and no lasting scientific results? Lakoff and Johnson (1999:107) want to argue for embodied scientific realism. Embodied truths are not objective truths, because truth depends on understanding. Yet, truth is not completely subjective, because embodiment keeps it from being purely subjective. The two philosophers argues that because we all have much the same embodied basic-level and spatial-relational concepts, there will be an enormous range of shared "truths". They argue that social truths make much better sense on this account than on the correspondence theory. These social truths are based on extremely wide understandings and experiences of culture, institutions, interpersonal relations and social practices. Social truth can only make

sense as an embodied truth because it makes no sense without understanding. Therefore, when one wants to determine what is just, the truth will depend on the understanding(s) existing in that specific embodied context, which will bring to the fore contested concepts such as fairness, rights, democracy, identity etc. One should therefore be careful to overemphasize the "enormous range of shared truths" that Lakoff and Johnson speaks of on the basis of shared human bodiliness. Social truths depend on the interactions of so many different understandings and so many variables play a role that I would caution against deterministic biological arguments.

Petersen (1999:48) provides us with some perspectives on how our social grammar influences the development of moral truths. He argues that people can intuitively recognize certain sentences as stating something unjust, very much in the same way as one would recognize a face, without being able to immediately explain what caused one to recognize it. Petersen (1999:49) describes this social grammar as layered and contingent, not derivable from simple principles. It involves an internalized ethical grammar, or a set of tacit norms, and a certain level of knowledge. We can think consciously about these norms and values, and they seem to be part of our common sense. Yet Petersen argues that these norms and values are often vague, and actually represent only the upper tip of a much more complicated structure of ethical norms, experiences and knowledge. Ineffable ethical norms and feelings, inclinations and emotions that belong to the collective unconscious represent the unconscious layers of the mind, and this is where somatic markers originate.

This social grammar is shared and silent in character, a collective unconscious, as Petersen (1999:53) explains it. Every member of the community carries a holographic impression of the collective unconscious, which is part of the social grammar in their hearts and minds, without being able to state the particulars. Every member of the community would be able to make value judgments on the basis of this impression without being able to show an explicit chain of reasoning. This social grammar displays a certain generativity in that the ineffable norms and feelings of the deeper layers of this grammar will allow many different concrete moral judgments to be generated by the individual, all in some way compatible with the shared, but ineffable grammar. Petersen (1999:57) explains this social grammar by using

the metaphor of a game that is defined by a number of general rules, but does not allow for individual actions to be predicted or determined. The ineffability of this grammar means that it cannot be changed at will, that is subjectively, we can only listen to it. Yet one has to emphasize that this does not mean that our individual judgments and actions will just be involuntary expressions of the collective unconscious, since grammar does not determine specific judgments and actions. Ethical considerations comprises both the complex set of social-emotional responses we have inherited and our ability to let our emotions be activated by the virtual experiences constructed with the aid of symbols in order to make novel judgments and decisions. The outcome is thus neither determined solely by the grammar we inherited, nor does it allow for arbitrary subjective outcomes (Petersen 1999:59).

By referring to the work of Polanyi, Petersen (1999:25) refers to various kinds of knowledge that all play a role in how we perceive a situation and how we make decisions about what to believe and what to do. In the first place he refers to formal, explicit knowledge that includes declarative, propositional knowledge and explicit procedural knowledge. In the second place, he refers to the "silent patron" type of knowledge that includes personal tacit knowledge and implicit knowledge, i.e. informal, impressionistic, self-regulatory knowledge and tacit knowledge structures. What Polanyi explains to us is that we go from certain particulars to what may be seen as a gestalt. Because of our previous experience, we are able to recognize a gestalt without recounting all the various particulars. We tacitly integrate all the particulars to a whole without consciously being aware of how we reach our conclusion. In fact Polanyi would argue that by forcing ourselves to constantly break the world into particulars, we might cause a self-willed kind of autism, in which particulars remain meaningless fragments (Petersen 1999:38). Thirdly, what he calls "lumpy knowledge" includes stratified knowledge and new knowledge based on unspecifiable and subliminal clues. This could be illustrated by a technician or professional who received certain basic knowledge through training, but is able to do infinitely more than what she or he has directly been told, without being able to explain where the knowledge comes from (Petersen 1999:42). Fourthly, social and cultural knowledge refers to that which we inherit from our communities. All these types of knowledge work together in a way that we can hardly comprehend, much less predict with any certainty. In my view they constitute a web

objective, will constitute the matrix in which all subjects and objects are formed, deformed and reformed.

It is this process that allow organizations to operate as non-totalizing structures that I will attempt to describe in the last section, in order to develop a theory on how moral decision-making and behavior in the organization might develop and operate. I will argue that individuals develop a relational conception of the good, both in economic and moral terms, and that the measure in which individuals identify and associate themselves with these goods becomes the strange attractor that binds them together within the organization. However, just as much as they intersubjectively constitute the good, they are themselves changed and influenced by it. Changes from within themselves, the external environment and new additions to the organization places the whole system in flux, therefore instability and an ongoing redefinition and re-evaluation of the strange attractor in the organization will be inevitable. Furthermore, the existence of the strange attractor that binds the complex system together does not mean that all behavior and decisions can be explained by referring to it. In fact, the character and content of the attractor may be so complex and volatile that it is indeed hard to pinpoint, and cause and effect relations within the complex system makes clear-cut prediction of behavior and perceptions virtually impossible.

4.4. Living and reliving the relational character of moral values:

This section will argue that moral values and the ethical principles by which they are explained do not exist as timeless universal truths to which impartial and objective reason provide access. Rather, moral values are the result of the fact that we as humans define "the good" in terms of complex interactions of positive feedback, continuous evaluation and practical effectivity in our relationships with other human beings, nature, and if we are religious, the Transcendent. The way in which we balance the interest of all the parties involved results in certain moral goods being established and re-established as time goes by. Yet, we do not, as subjects, have unlimited and uncontrolled power to arrange the content of what is considered morally good as we please and by whim. That would, of course, result in moral relativism, and it would also belie the insight of the twentieth century philosophers

that we as subjects are also the objects of our own construal and devices. The fact that we as subjects are at the same time also objects serves to bring us beyond the category of subjective and objective truths to relational truths. And even with regards to relational truths we do not have to resort to relativism as the critics of pragmatism argue. The reason being that the truth is not disregarded in its totality every time individuals come to define what constitutes the good. Those individuals stand within a certain tradition, have a certain upbringing, is a unique configuration of value-systems as Chapter 2 argued. Every subject is determined by the historical, contingent "*Geworfenheit*" which human existence implies. It is in exploring the limits of this *Geworfenheit* and pushing against the boundaries of perceptions and beliefs inherent to this condition that moral values become valuable. Moral development, it will be argued, takes place when the relations in play in determining the "good" in a particular situation is broadened and diversified, because as the number of relations used in determining the good increases, the danger of the good becoming an exclusive arrangement to the benefit of the few diminishes. This also enables us to take what is often seen as a complicating factor of the pluralistic environment and use it as one of the most important strengths in developing a moral working environment. This concept of relational values also undermines the distinction between material goods and moral goods, since all decisions on "goods" are made in relation to every other person and aspect of society. The dichotomies of the public versus the private, the political versus the ethical etc. are also addressed in this way.

4.4.1. From the impartial individual subject to relational subjectivity:

The reaction against the rational subject who can access objective reality by means of his/her reason, has been addressed by various philosophers in the twentieth century. Mark Taylor (1987) traces this reaction against the subject to Martin Heidegger's attempt to address the inherent nihilism in modernity. As Taylor (1987:37) explains, the distinguishing characteristic of modern philosophy is to think Being in terms of subjectivity. The work of Heidegger explains the way in which Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness extends and completes the Cartesian return to the subject. The subject's search for certainty and stability by means of the objectification of reality takes revenge upon the subject itself

when the objective fruits of man's subjectivity reign supreme and man itself becomes objectified. Heidegger wants to dismantle the conception of the human subject mastering reality and pleads for the realization that man cannot grasp reality by means of subjective reason but must rather allow reality to present itself, in fact, to unveil itself. This openness towards the arrival of reality and refraining from grasping reality as subject, is explained in Heidegger's conception of the gift. The arrival of reality is as unexpected and unreciprocal as the acceptance of a gift. Man must remain open to the arrival of this gift by acknowledging his/her *"Geworfenheit"* "thrownness" in the historical and contingent reality.

A less well-known aspect of Heidegger's work is the concept of *Mitsein,* which is explored by Frederick Olafson as a clue to Heidegger's views on morality. Although Heidegger never directly addressed the issues of normative ethics, in *Being and Time* he provides a very harsh critique of the whole conception of "values" as objective criteria for the guidance of our lives. These "objective values" belong to an anonymous public mode of selfhood that excludes individuality and the distinctive character of the human being and are no more than a set of defenses by which we human beings hide our freedom from ourselves (Olafson 1998:3). The question that needs to be asked is whether, in a world without moral signposts, standards of right and wrong are still possible in our relation to one another. Heidegger's thoughts on what constitutes authentic human life provide us with some clues in this regard. In Being and Time he has a section devoted to *Mitsein,* our being in the world together with one another. This is not merely an empirical fact, but rather a constitutive element in our own mode of being as well in that of every other being. Olafson (1998:4) indicates that mere empathy will not suffice in doing this being-together-in-the-world justice. Heidegger speaks of *Fürsorge* - one human being's caring about the other - and it is this caring that he declares to be, in its several modalities, central to our being with one another. One of the existential virtues closely akin to authenticity, namely "resoluteness", pushes us to caring *Mitsein* with one another.

The special character of the relationships amongst human beings is of central importance for moral philosophy. The mode in which human beings are in the world together is that of disclosing both other entities and themselves. According to Olafson (1998: 11), the.

Heideggerian conception of a human being as "subject-entity" (*seiendes Subjekt*) makes the character of our being together in the world much less "obvious" than it is usually thought to be. Not only the mode of being that is quite different from *Dasein* is being disclosed, but also other like entities - other human beings. Both the Ego and the Alter and their cousins not only have a world in Heidegger's sense of the world, but they are also reciprocally present to one another as having a world - in a way for which there is no parallel in the natural world. Olafson argues that "our being for the sake of others" does indeed follow from *Mitsein* as this relation of reciprocal presence. He argues that the recognition of another human being as complementing one's own being is prior to the definition of substantive rules of conduct (do's and don'ts), whether of justice or whatever, and this identity of the Ego and Alter, accordingly, would imply that this relationship has an influence on how ethical perceptions and behavior develop. There is a partnership implicit in this kind of reciprocity between human beings that carries with it a binding character of a specifically ethical kind. The relation of one subject-entity or *Dasein* to another constitutes a whole new approach to what is regarded as authoritative moral requirements. Olafson argues that we are unavoidably implicated in ethical relationships with one another and in those relationships we are both bound and free - free in the sense that only in our relation to others we can acknowledge and realize our own human nature, and bound in that we cannot treat others in a way we do not accept for ourselves.

As was argued in Chapter 2, our perception of the moral good is influenced by many different factors that originate from all the various aspects of our lives. It is therefore not strange that Olafson (1998:73) indicates that the kind of human world in which we paradoxically and somewhat discreditably feel most at home, has the kind of hybrid character in which the commitment of human beings to any set of understandings based on mutual recognition is never very secure and in which quite inconsistent life policies may alternate in a single life with bewildering frequency. Olafson (1998:73) claims that the ethical reality of our lives is therefore neither that of the unalloyed state of nature nor that of a true moral community, but rather a confused mixture of the two. This compels us to live with the particular uncertainty that surrounds precisely those statements that we considered irrevocable and free of ambiguity.

Olafson (1998:84) investigates the good as the foundation of our notions of well-being and happiness. He indicates that the "good" has, especially in the modern period, been understood as defining forms of satisfaction that need not in themselves be inherently ethical in character. The "good" has been seen mostly as an object of desire, as something attractive to human beings. The "other standard" that is used to evaluate the good in terms of its moral content, has been the "right", which unlike the good, has no immediate attractive associations with it. The principle of the right that Kant for instance requires of us, has as its underlying assumption a kind of self-denial that presupposes the familiar contrast between the life of enjoyment and a strenuously conceived moral rectitude. Kant also aligned our rational natures with the latter and argued that our dignity as moral beings will compensate us for the sacrifice of pleasure. The fact that we act upon the rational decisions of our higher faculties constitutes a new kind of good that comes our way when we adhere to the right. But is the satisfaction that we get from doing the right thing always something that sacrifices pleasure, a sacrifice that is decided upon rationally?

Olafson (1998) argued that the central axis of our moral life is our developing understanding of the implications of the fact that there are other human beings in the world with us. When one takes into consideration that the notion of *Mitsein* generate a kind of mutuality that makes the other's happiness a condition of one's own, this kind of happiness becomes a good that incorporates the moral content of the right within it. Olafson (1998:89) explains that in the context of *Mitsein* the goods that we value and seek for ourselves increasingly become what can be called "person-related goods". We therefore come to understand that the goods we ordinarily seek are mediated by other human beings, who in one way or another help us to acquire what we want or need. Olafson (1998:92) argues that it is only in a reciprocal relation to someone who can recognize us and confirm us in our sense of what we aspire to be that a form of happiness is realized that cannot be reduced to the private consumption of the good things this world has to offer. I want to go even a little bit further, to ask whether the material pleasures offered to us by the world is not indeed also the result of our *Mitsein* with others and the positive or negative feedback we receive in relation to our professional success, our lifestyle, and our influence

and status. This would mean that even material goods, and the economic values needed to produce them, are intricately bound up in our being-with-others in this world.

When one looks at the way the market economy operates, it becomes clear that the relational character of our being-in-the-world certainly influences the way economic goods and services are distributed. I want to argue that those perceptions and motivations that constitute economic goods are no less determined by the fact that our being-in-the-world places us in certain relations with other human beings than by moral perceptions and opinions. We come to strive towards certain economic goods and certain moral goods because we derive positive feedback from attaining certain economic goods, just as we derive positive feedback from pursuing certain moral goods.

In fact, marketing experts such as Hackley and Kitchen (1999) argue that effective marketing communication seek to combine emotional and rational appeals to create certain perceptions of "the good life" that people may want to aspire to. What the media can for instance do, is to relate a part of the subjective reality of the individual to some external stimuli. According to Hume's epistemology, used by Hackley and Kitchen (1999:20) in his analysis, we associate one idea with another if there is a resemblance between them, or if they are contiguous in time or place. If the association of the one idea with the other is compelling enough, they may appear to become necessarily connected after a number of repetitions. This means that what becomes desirable in the economic sense, and what therefore derives profit and drives the market economy, is directly influenced by the way human beings measure themselves, their ideas and perceptions, against those of other people, institutions or even natural phenomenon. Why is this an important point to make? I will argue that the dichotomy that exists between so-called business values such as profit, efficiency, productivity, sustainability etc. and so-called moral values of justice, equity, honesty, and benevolence, causes us to always seek the solutions to business ethics dilemmas in terms of the either-or style of reasoning. I would like to believe that if we take into account the relational way in which our perceptions of the "good" come into being, we might find that the goods sought in the economic world supports moral goods, and moral goods also support the good life that is a necessary condition for a growing economy.

Hackley and Kitchen (1999:18) uses the example of British citizens watching scenes of children starving in Africa on TV. For the purposes of this discussion, we can imagine wealthy suburban residents of South Africa seeing pictures of starving children in other parts of Africa. We might sympathize, and try to imagine what those children or their parents must be feeling, or we may look down on them, judging that a lack of hard work and dedication caused the situation. By the same impulse, we see advertising images of affluent consumption and if our experiential reality does not match the image we might experience a subjective feeling of dissonance, or a state of felt deprivation. In this case, it seems that our desire for certain economic goods may directly influence our moral perceptions, and our moral perceptions might also influence our striving towards certain economic goods. In the first instance it is clear to us that the situation is not only an undesirable economic state, it also makes a moral appeal on us. We might shrug off our moral conscience by arguing that certain values such as hard work, dedication, honesty and respect for human dignity as is ingrained in our new South African Constitution sets those living in wealthy suburban areas apart from those living in certain other African countries. We can even argue that the poverty in South Africa itself is the legacy of the previous dispensation where these values were undermined or at least restricted to only the affluent White minority. But we will be hard-pressed to sustain the argument that people bring poverty upon themselves precisely because of the fact that there is no clear-cut distinction between the economic and the moral dimensions of life, nor between the political and the ethical, and the public and the private. The whole of our being-in-this-world are determined by what we perceive as good in relation to other people, institutions, nature, and if we are religious, the Transcendent. The things we hold as highest goods determine how we deal with political power, how we distribute social goods such as education and health care how we run our economy, how we manage our businesses, and how we deal with one another as human beings in all spheres of life.

If we acknowledge the complexity of relations by which all the various spheres of life is related to one another, and the intersubjective relations which determines the content of our descriptions of the good, one cannot practice moral judgments by referring to some

abstract common set of values or principles that is supposed to guide us through moral dilemmas. Olafson (1998:93) makes the point that "values" cannot bind people to one another any more than the consumer preferences on their shopping lists can. I want to argue that Olafson is correct in saying that we should refrain from speaking about "values" as objective, timeless moral truths that must be applied to practical moral dilemmas. The *explicatio-applicatio* logic of this type of moral reasoning does not make any sense if one realizes that the moral content value or principles that is being explicated in the explication activity, is indeed part of and determined by the relational practice of people grappling with one another on certain moral issues. Olafson (1998:96) insists that he has neither postulated the idea of a new moral truth nor retreated into subjectivism. He is rather advocating the idea of a relationship between human beings that is preeminently realized in our capacity to acknowledge a common truth. But these common truths should not be seen as something that functions as objective, universal moral guidelines, once again separating the "is" from the "ought". Rather, our lives with other like beings constitutes a relation between us that has a normative character, and it is that relation that finds expression in the "ought". By this reasoning, Olafson (1998:99) indicates, the whole conception of the ethical as something either subjective or objective- either in here or out there - is shown to be beside the point. Understanding Being as a milieu of presence enables us to understand ethics as the locus in the world of the encounter with one another of entities that exist. Dasein's inability to understand itself in any other way than by a false assimilation of itself to inappropriate models drawn from entities in its world could indeed be made bearable by the fact that there are indeed such entities as we humans, entities that can recognize one another as bearers of truth and relate to one another so as to at least approximate some tailor-made, temporary solutions to life's most difficult moral dilemmas.

4.4.2. From exclusive constructions to interactive deconstructions: Levinas and Derrida

When reading the work of the French philosophers of the twentieth century, one finds that they pursued many similar intuitions, even though at many points they simply agree to disagree. In Derrida's essay *Differance*, he speaks of bringing together some different

directions and ideas that had originated over a period of time in a sheaf. He insisted on the word sheaf for two reasons. In the first place he wanted to illustrate the general system of the economy that each time, text by text, context by context, displayed a graphic disorder. On the other hand, the word sheaf indicated that the assemblage that he proposes has the complex structure of weaving, an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of meaning - or of force - to go off again in different directions, just as it is always ready to tie itself with others (Derrida 1982:4). I am going to attempt to employ something of the same in this section, where I would attempt to weave together the ideas of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida based on an intuition as to where the overlapping of some of their ideas in the complex web of twentieth century thought might lead us in our thinking about morality in the workplace. In identifying certain common concerns, in weaving together my own subjective construction on where all this might lead us, I will not pretend to bring these philosophers together in some common structure, or to dialectically place them against one another in order to once again synthesize the differences in some Hegelian fashion. Rather, I will eclectically make use of some of their insights, play with their different meanings and agendas and see where this leads us.

One of the most basic concerns both Levinas and Derrida inherited from Heidegger is the way in which our language structures and our knowledge systems inhibit our understanding of reality and ourselves. Both Levinas and Derrida display frustration with attempts in the history of philosophy to deal with this problem. Kant's strategy doomed us to the unbridgeable dichotomy between subject and object, Hegel's dialectic system doomed us to dialectical oppositions and totalizing metanarratives synthesizing the whole of reality under the simplistic believe in the Absolute Spirit's ascent to absolute knowledge through human progress. Taylor (1986:346) explains that Western philosophy coincides with the disclosure of the other, where the other, in manifesting itself as a being, loses its alterity. As Levinas himself puts it: "*From its infancy philosophy has been struck by a horror of the other that remains other - with an insurmountable allergy.*"Philosophy became obsessed by immanence, autonomy, with the comprehension of being as its last word. Not only does the world understood by reason cease to be the other, but everything that is an attitude of consciousness, all feeling, action, labor etc. is in the last analysis self-consciousness, that is

identity and autonomy. Hegel's philosophy is according to Levinas the logical outcome of the underlying allergy of philosophy. Levinas asks us to put into question the thesis according to which the ultimate essence of man and of truth is the comprehension of the being of beings, a thesis to which theory, experience and discourse seem to lead. Levinas urges us to seek an attitude that cannot be converted into a category, whose movement towards the other is not recuperated in identification and that does not return to its point of departure (Taylor 1986:348).

In its capacity as the said, language is both our doorway and our barrier towards reality. Complex linguistic structures function to reduce the unknown to the known. Because of Western philosophy's belief in the autonomous reason of the self-conscious being, this "knowledge" is the result of mirroring the other in the same. Language remains the only way in which we can make our world comprehensible, and yet it is precisely the fact that we are completely dependant on language that makes the world inaccessible to us. Levinas agrees with Heidegger that in the modern world, knowledge becomes power through technology and its extension in the authoritarian state. In fact, as Taylor (1987:201) aptly describes it: "saying unveils through reveilation". This happens because reasons seek the relationship between terms, between the one and the other showing themselves in a theme, insisting on coherence, despite their difference. Insofar as the said is the systematic totality in which all parts are integrated, thought and being is assembled into a rational construction that is defined by a comprehensive and comprehensible theme. Levinas (1985:42) indicates that he is disappointed with Heidegger's attempt to see language as wisdom that must be clarified, since to him, Levinas, the *said* does not count as much as the *saying*. If reason becomes so all-powerful, the world becomes a penal colony, because the said declares war on every difference that does not conform to identity and every other that does not return to the same (Taylor 1987:198).[This results in what Lyotard would call a metanarrative.] Levinas questions the assumption upon which such a thematization rests, namely that all diachrony can be synchronized (Taylor 1987:200).

Taylor (1987:187) introduces Levinas's critique of Hegel by referring to Anti-Climatus's view that the self is not autonomous and self-positing as Hegel would have it. Rather, self-

relation is possible only by virtue of the relationship of the self to "an Other" (et Andet). The self is not autonomous but is in fact posited by an Other, which is explained by Kierkegaard, as infinitely and qualitatively different. The desire for the other, which is according to Levinas (in Taylor 1986:350) our very sociality, is not a simple relationship with a being where, according to our formulas, the other is converted to the same. The movement unto another, instead of completing and contenting me, puts me into question, empties me of myself, and does not let off emptying me, while at the same time uncovering for me ever new resources. In fact, Levinas is of the opinion that since the subject is not autonomous, the self's relationship to itself necessarily entails its relation to an Other. The return to and of this Other is the eternal recurrence of the alterity that decentres the subject (Llewelyn 1995:68-69). In contrast to the active subject of modern philosophy, Levinas speaks of a subjectivity of bottomless passivity, made out of assignation, like the echo of a sound that would precede the resonance of this sound. The active source of this subjectivity is not thematizable. Levinas uses the term *ille* to suggest this nonthematizable source of the subject. Illeity links up with the "Other", "Infinite" and "Alterity" to form a metonymic chain of signifiers intended to evoke what cannot be designated. This alterity escapes binary oppositions because the Other cannot be rendered merely the opposite of self, since the relation with the Other is in fact bound up with the constitution of the self.

Ricoeur (1992:337) criticizes Levinas' arguments as being in the philosophical style of hyperbole. The way in which the ego is described in *Totality and Infinity* as being possessed with the desire to form a circle with itself, to identify itself, and in *Time and the Other*, where it is described as a stubbornly closed, locked-up, separate ego creates the impression of absolute interiority versus absolute exteriority between the self and the "Other" Ricoeur (1992:139) argues that if interiority were indeed determined solely by the desire for retreat and closure, how could it ever hear a word addressed to it? Ricoeur is also critical of Levinas' description of the "Other" as an executioner that demands responsibility for the "Other" to the point of substitution. Ricoeur (1992:340) feels that Levinas underestimates the importance of a sense of selfhood and sameness as precisely the means by which the self is able to relate to the other. Van der Ven (1998:17) notes that Ricoeur does not explicitly refer to the distinction Levinas makes between *being with* and

being for. Levinas being a Jew exposed to the reality of holocaust-atrocities sees this a crucial distinction. Being *with* others is understood as basically just living past one another in the world, ignoring the existence and humanity of other human beings, whereas being *for* others is to allow oneself to be addressed by the existence of others. Being for the other refers to the same openness to the other that Ricoeur advocates in his defense of a certain type of friendship, which is not oriented toward utility or pleasure, but which is rather based the mutuality of being *for* the other.

Yet Ricoeur (1992:183) is making the important point that for an individual to be able to respond to the other in a moral way, this individual has have a sense of what would be a moral response. Ricoeur (1992:182) argues that the individual can only have this sense if he or she has a certain sense of self-esteem, which is in fact connected to what this individual believes constitutes "the good life". How this sense of the good life forms part of how we develop our moral metaphors, will be dealt with in more detail later on in the chapter. The virtue of true Aristotelian friendship is in fact according to Ricoeur the transition between the individual's self-esteem, based on his/ her sense of the good life, and justice. Ethics is according to Ricoeur (1992:172) made up of these three things, the individual's sense of the good-life for herself (self-esteem), with others (solicitude) in just institutions (justice).

Levinas, being very wary of the "strong self" that he so directly experienced in Nazi-arrogance, believes it is very necessary for the self to be decentered by the Other. Levinas believes that another's alien existence can concern us, can contest us, and can in fact elect us for a debt that can never be repaid. For Levinas, the face of the other is a trace, a trace lost in a trace. The face that the I/ eye encounter is always the face of another. The other I face is the neighbor, which is near but never present, comes close without arriving. Because the face as such is not present, it escapes representation, it is the very collapse of phenomenality. Levinas explains that only the meaning of the other is irrecusable, it forbids the reclusion and reentry into the shell of the self. Levinas' *il-y-a* echoes Heidegger's *Es gibt.* There is no necessity attached to this gift, it is contingent, like the throw of a dice. And it condemns the subject to guilt. Through the infinite, which comes to pass in the face of the neighbor, the subject is condemned by what nonetheless is "the Good". Levinas

argues that the "Good" is before being. The Good assigns the subject according to susception, reception that cannot be assumed, to approach the Other, the neighbor. In this assignation, responsibility is antecedent to freedom. The subject's freedom is manifested in its response-ability, i.e. in the subject's ability to respond to the call of the Other. Being-for-self is always being-for-other, which issues another aspect of responsibility, that of a response to the approach of the neighbor (Taylor 1987:212).

What does this "subjectivity as the other in the same" mean in terms of the moral character of individuals? Does it mean that the self is no longer autonomous and that one can no longer make independent moral decisions based on one's value-systems and principles? In my view Levinas' idea of the passive subject and the subject that is forever uprooted and decentered by the Other wants to make us aware of the relational character of our moral selves. These relations have various sources. As was argued in Chapter 2, they originate from families, from cultural beliefs and activities, from societal institutions such as schools, businesses and churches. In fact, I think that Levinas would make a strong argument that the *Ganz Andere* is in fact God, that is revealed to us in the face of every other we meet. The most important relation that reveals to us something beyond ourselves, something that transcends ourselves, is in fact our relationship with God.

Some other philosophers have in fact questioned whether interpreting the Other in terms of the Transcendent does not in fact once again betray the temporary character and the facticity of all human claims to truth. John D Caputo, in his *Against Ethics*, makes some interesting points against Levinas that we might consider to see if they will enrich our perspectives on morality in the workplace. First of all one must make clear that Caputo in fact argues along very similar lines to that of Levinas' moral theory. Yet there are some important differences. Caputo (1993:13) explains that he is against ethics since ethics stands in the Greek tradition of constructing metaphysical structures and universalizing statements. As Caputo (1993:4) puts it: ethics lays the foundations for principles that force people to be good, it clarifies concepts, secures judgments and provides safe guardrails against the slippery slopes of factical life. Caputo wants to replace these foundational certainties by appealing to something else, another moral impulse that he describes as

obligations that happen to us, that arrive in the Heideggerian sense of *Es gibt*. Obligation is a feeling, a feeling of being bound, which overtakes me, in which I am caught up, by which I am taken hold of by something else, something other. Caputo (1993:8) explains that the otherness of another, the heteronomic force of the other, is the dislocating site of obligation that disrupts me, that knocks me out of orbit. One can see the similarities between Levinas *il-y-a* and the face of the Other and Caputo's views on obligation.

Against the Greek conception of universal good, Caputo uses the biblical character of Abraham, the Jew, to illustrate the type of moral impulses that he describes when he speaks of obligation. When Abraham is called on to kill his son, he does not try and get on top of this command, to penetrate it, to see through it, he just takes it, in the accusative, receives it, accepts it, stands under it and allows it opacity and impenetrability (Caputo 1993:11). This obligation that in fact "happens" to Abraham lacks the Greek spirit of beauty, autonomy and intelligibility. Caputo describes it as ugly, Jewish, Abrahamic. This obligation is the ugliness of discord and subjection, of being disrupted and disturbed by a call that comes from without. Ethics and metaphysics abhor the singularity and the incomprehensibility that Abraham has to face. Obligation happens in the density of particularity and transcendence - it clogs the gears of ethical reasoning and jams its judgments (Caputo 1993:15). The problem with ethics as it is practiced from within the Greek tradition of metaphysics is that it attempts to contain what it cannot contain and to harbor what it cannot protect, and that is the ineffability of the individual.

The individual cannot be contained in the repeatable, universal terms of our language. Therefore Derrida (in Taylor 1986:413) indicated to us in his explanation of *differance* that there can be no reference-without-difference, that meaning constantly defers, it is forever delayed or postponed, it never arrives. Furthermore meanings differ, it is always different, it celebrates otherness and alterity. Derrida refers to the formula that Levinas uses to qualify the trace and the enigma of absolute alterity - " a past that has never been present", in order to indicate that one cannot make of temporization a simple dialectical completion of the living present as an unceasing synthesis that is constantly directed back on itself. As Derrida (in Taylor 1986:415) explains: " *Always differing and deferring, the*

trace is never as it is in the presentation of itself. It erases itself in presenting itself, muffles itself in resonating, like the a writing itself, inscribing its pyramid in difference ".

Up to this point it seems as though Levinas, Derrida and Caputo have the same agenda, and are in agreement on the fact that language and truth can never represent reality. Rather, truth arrives as a gift (Heidegger's *Es gibt*), or as an obligation in Caputo's terms, or as the *il-y-a* in the face of the Other, that Levinas refers to. Because it reveals itself when it unveils itself, it can never be finalized, systematized or categorized. The diachronic dimension can never be taken out of this arrival in order to universalize a statement, principle or truth. When time is taken out of the equation, or when it is inscribed as part of the synthesizing process, truth becomes dogmatism and ethics looses its capacity to guide the ineffable individual in the facticity of its existence.

Yet, it seems as though there is no consensus on how one should understand this alterity, this otherness that arrives, that obligates, that deconstructs the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. Caputo (1993:83) writes that the absolutely other is a poetic and hyperbolic name for the fact, as it were, of obligation, of heteronomy, that we do not belong to ourselves but that we are held in the grip of something absolutely *heteros*. Yet he believes that Levinas goes a bit too far in weaving a fabulous, poetic story about absolute alterity, the infinitely, ab-solutely Other which is not being-otherwise but otherwise than being. Levinas posits absolute alterity on the one side, the side of the Other, and on this side, our side, the side of the same, he puts absolute altruism. Somehow Levinas believes that our relationship to this Absolutely Other and our absolute altruism are correlates. Caputo (1993:82) is of the opinion that Levinas wants to hold on to a dream of a world without *difference*, without textuality, without phrases, without horizons, contexts, settings and frameworks. Caputo himself holds that it is impossible to embrace absolute altruism because of some Absolute Other, because that would mean getting completely, absolutely outside, outside of the facticity of the self. Rather, Caputo thinks that the Other is finite, fragile, not infinite and absolute. The Other is not an absolute, not a transcendental fact, not a fact of pure reason, but a factical fact that is construed by a hermeneutics of facticity (Caputo 1993:85). Caputo's idea of ethics wants to uphold the

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facticity of the human self in which we are all contaminated. He refers to his version of ethics as a jewgreek ethics, includes an idea of *eudaimonia*, of a certain *fröhliche Wissenschaft*, of certain self-love and self-interest, which goes along with a sense of obligation. The two work together in heteromorphic-heteronomic tension. It is heteromorph in the sense that we have more than one game to play, and that more than one game is playing us (Caputo 1993:124).

The question I want to pose is whether what Caputo says about the facticity of the self and the contaminated nature of all human existence categorically excludes the possibility that we are also addressed by Something/ Someone that transcends us. Is it a question of all or nothing? *Either* we are addressed by God/ some other transcendent Being *or* we are addressed by something of the other in its human facticity, something contextual? One does not have to be rid of all facticity, all self-interest, all humanity to be addressed by the Transcendent. In fact, how else could we be addressed? How else could we voice what we experience but as a relationship with that which transcends us? I would want to argue that obligation indeed arrives, it happens, as a gift that we cannot predict or even retrospectively explain. Obligation cannot be pinpointed as the result of either God or human facticity, but is probably rather the result of whatever relationships we enter into. If our relationships are restricted to human beings, concrete events, and economic systems, then the face of the other will probably arrive in and through those relationships. If our relationships include a relationship with the Transcendent/ God, the face of the other might sometimes be that of God, sometimes that of God showing herself in the face of a human being, sometimes our own self-interest pretending to be God. Obligation is not always God-given, God-ordained, but that does not mean that it never could be. Each concrete situation reveals obligation because of the relationships in play in that specific context, and should be treated as such.

I agree with Caputo (1993:173) when he says that obligation happens in living flesh and in rotten corpses, wherever the power of the powerlessness surges towards us and touches us. Obligation arises from those with or without names, and I would want to include those with or without bodies. Obligations can arise from our memories, our subconscious, and our

beliefs in mystical forces. Obligations can also arise from things that do not have bodies or corpses or spirits, but which are merely the structural effects of our activities in this world. Therefore obligations can arise from political systems, from the workings of economics, from organizational structures and cultures, and from job descriptions. What I am arguing is that if we want to understand how moral judgments operate in the workplace, we have to understand how all these relationships in and through which we go about our daily activities, might mitigate how we think and act. If we want to create a space within which obligation can arise, we must not think of some impartial position from which we can objectively judge the situation according to universal principles. We must open ourselves to be addressed by the relationships in which we stand. If we want obligation to arise, we must be careful not to exclude certain relationships because they make us uncomfortable or because they do not neatly fit into our chosen course of action. We must allow ourselves to be addressed by the full complexity of what constitutes our obligation in that specific situation.

Caputo (1993:225) makes us aware of the fact that there are no stars to guide us through the flux of events. In terms of ethics I think this means that we do not have any one set of principles that stand above reason or doubt, that we cannot simplistically leave it up to God/ another transcendent being to always provide us with a clear-cut answer to our dilemmas. Caputo argues that obligation happens with and in terms of the singularity of the individual. I want to argue that this singular individual stands in many relationships that are very difficult to pinpoint and therefore very difficult to explain. I agree with Caputo (1993:227) that obligations are strictly local events, sublunary affairs, between us - matters of flesh and blood. Yet I believe that the relationships in which we stand not only sometimes place unbearable guilt and obligation on us, they often also provide us with support and guidance, however contextual, temporary and limited it might be.

To quote Caputo (1993:246) on the value of these contingent, fragile and temporary glimpses of morality:

" Obligations are fleeting, finite victories over the anonymity which is older than us, which is stronger and deeper than us, which is before we are. Obligations are our hyperbolic act of

affirming infinite worth, of attaching hyperbolic significance to the least among us, of answering infinite demands, within the frail, finite, fragile bounds of our mortality".

It is interesting to note that where Caputo tries to steer clear of an ethics, and rather appeals to some moral sense of obligation, Paul Ricoeur argues for the primacy of ethics over morality. Under "ethics" Ricoeur (1992:170-172) understands the aim of a good life with and for others, in just institutions, whereas "morality" is understood as the articulation of this aim in norms characterized at once by the claim to universality and by an effect of constraint. In the distinction between the aim and the norm two distinct heritages are easily recognizable, namely on the one hand the Aristotelian heritage where ethics is characterized by its teleological perspective, and on the other the Kantian heritage, where morality is defined by the obligation to respect the norm, described as the deontological point of view. The "good life" is, for each of us, the sum-total of ideas and dreams of achievements with regard to which life seen as fulfilled or unfulfilled. We therefore relate our most important decisions in our careers, love life and leisure to our idea of the good life as we understand the whole and the parts of a text in terms of the other and this constitutes the ongoing process of the formation of the self. On an ethical plane, self-interpretation becomes self-esteem. Ricoeur (1992:171) argues that whereas the ethical aim corresponds with the notion of self-esteem, the deontological sense of morality corresponds to the notion of self-respect. Self-esteem is the sense of the self as it develops as part of the reflective movement by which certain actions are evaluated and judged. This sense of self-esteem remains abstract as long as it lacks the dialogic structure, which is introduced by the reference to others. This dialogic structure, in turn, remains incomplete outside of reference to just institutions. Therefore, self-esteem assumes its complete sense only at the end of the meaning traced out by the three components of the ethical aim. These connections between the self (in its otherness), other people and institutions forms a narrative unity of life, or life-plan which, as Gadamer indicates, instills in us a certain Aristotelian *phronesis,* practical wisdom and knowledge of practices that guide us in our thoughts and actions. Ricoeur (1992:178) explains that the word "life" indicates reference to the person as a whole, in opposition to fragmented pieces.

This indicates the biologic rootedness of life and the unity of the person as a whole, as that person casts upon himself or herself the gaze of appraisal.

This phronesis is a practical wisdom that does not provide us with quick fixes for all our moral dilemmas, but which rather equips us with some tools on how to think about them. These tools are a combination of our views on the good life, which in itself is the product of various processes and influences, and some normative guidelines on how we are to go about achieving these goods. Ricoeur connects the three elements of ethics, namely self-esteem in personal life, friendship and solicitude in interpersonal life, and justice in institutional life with three groups of moral criteria that form the deontological parameters by which we can try to realize our vision of the good life in practical situations. They are: autonomy in personal life, respect for others in interpersonal life, and procedural justice in democratic institutional life. The good life must be worked out in the historical facticity of life, a life that is according to Ricoeur determined by "fundamental indeterminacy" (Van der Ven 1998:177). In this process of dealing with each moral dilemma in its singularity, we need the insights of many approaches and paradigms, we need to expand our tools as much as possible.

Whether one chooses to use the terms ethics or morality to indicate the moral sense that both Caputo and Ricoeur allude to is perhaps not so important. What is important is that both Caputo and Ricoeur want to argue for a rootedness of the moral in the biological and factical existence of human beings. Furthermore, as is indicated in the last section of chapter 3, we will be wise to acknowledge the relationship between the teleological notions inherent in any deontological argument, just as we will have to identify and define moral norms and its content in reference to the good we are seeking. The two cannot do without one another. The other ethical approaches critically evaluated in chapter 3 also provide us with important perspectives, such as the narrative unity of community mores and norms. We will now attempt to use a combination of the available ethical approaches and the twentieth century philosophical insights to come to a new theoretical approach to dealing with morality in the workplace.

4.5. The narrative structure of our moral metaphors:

Ricoeur's (1992: 179) views on the narrative configuration of the self and the narrative unity of life gives a certain priority to the connectedness brought about by the structure of events, which Ricoeur regards as the touchstone of the analysis of the self. Characters, are in fact in themselves plots. The narratives of which we are all part submit our identity to imaginative variations. It does not merely tolerate these variations, it in fact engenders them, and seek them out (Ricoeur 1992:143-148). Not only are our moral selves the result of complex configurations of the events and influences we are exposed to throughout our lives, combined with innate ability and characteristics, but the narrative structure of our lives necessarily implies constant interaction with others and institutions. Since it is very unlikely to form a plot on one's own, our ideas on the good life are formed and transformed within our interaction with others and the institutions we live and work in. It therefore never develops in isolation from other people and institutions. In return, our interaction with other people and institutions change these interpersonal relations and the institutions within which we live and work.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1999:290) explorations of cognitive science and cognitive semantics provides us with the means of a detailed and comprehensive analysis of what our moral concepts are and of how their logic works. Our cognitive unconscious is populated with an extensive system of metaphoric mappings for conceptualizing, reasoning about, and communicating our moral ideas. These metaphors are grounded in the nature of our bodies and social interactions and are thus not arbitrary, but are rather grounded in our various experiences of well being, especially physical well being. For instance, it is better to be healthy, rather than sick, it is better to breathe pure air, rather than contaminated air, it is better to be strong, rather than weak, better to be free, rather than to be restrained or coerced, better to live with order, rather than chaos etc. Therefore, we use moral terms such as moral purity, moral strength, moral freedom, and moral order. Our moral sense is directly linked to the fact that we conceptualize well-being as wealth. We speak of leading a rich and meaningful life, of investing in our relationships and our societies, or on the other hand, wasting our lives. Yet it is interesting to note that for a very long time, the physical

and economic realities that form the reference base for our moral metaphors were seen as something that belong to a sphere separate from morality. We used to argue that some activities are value-free, some have some objective logic and mechanism that should not be contaminated with value-statements. One could argue that the strict dichotomies between facts and values and public and private robbed us of a proper understanding of what morality really entails.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999:333) argues that because our moral understanding comes, via metaphor, from a broad range of other domains of experience, and since we apply these metaphors to different experiential domains, we should be wary of compartmentalizing. In fact, the cross-domain mappings of the metaphors suggest an intricate web of connections between most spheres of our lives. The interconnectedness of our moral reasoning has a number of implications. In the first place it becomes impossible to practice moral reasoning without situating it within a specific time and space. Because morality is directly linked not only to our bodiliness, but also to our relationships and the institutional structures we operate in, it becomes impossible to define "the good" universally. Since our sense of well-being determines our views of the good-life, "the good" is something that has to be negotiated by all involved and that should be open to renegotiation as circumstances changes. Does this lead us to a theory of radical ethical relativism, where no moral judgments can be made on what is good outside of the specific context? Yes and no. Yes, it is impossible to judge whether a system, a country, or an institution has behaved immorally without looking and understanding the unique contextual realities, relationships and power configurations operative in that context. No, in the sense that every situation lends itself to evaluation, if the best interests of the parties involved are brought into play. We can see that in our basic definition of the good we use a certain teleological notion of what constitutes the "good", namely that which serves the interest of all the parties involved. Yet we need to go beyond this teleological notion. One important caveat is that a discussion on morality should never exclude one of the parties involved, since then evaluation of the system will become impossible. We see that here we are building in some Kantian safety valves - never treat anyone as a means to and end, but always as an end in itself. We therefore have to refer back to our conclusion in chapter 3 that some combination of

procedural and substantive form of justice is necessary. Since we came to the conclusion that substantive and procedural aspects should be interrelated, one comes to the conclusion that if the good is defined contextually, so should be the procedure. What this means in the practice of business and institutional communities will be discussed in Chapter 5. We will develop an alternative approach to "the good" in the business world, attempting to get rid of the dichotomy that causes business ethics to be considered an oxymoron. In fact, it will be argued that negotiations on what constitutes the good in a particular business practice for all involved in that practice will restore the narrative unity of our lives, and allow us to practice sound ethics.

If the provision that no one person or party may be excluded from discussions of what constitutes the good in that particular context, remains the prerequisite for these negotiations, we will need more than a form of Kantian universalism and utilitarian notions of what goods always trump others in a 'means to an end' type of relationship. We have seen that calculating harms and goods becomes virtually impossible because of the complex nature of moral relationships. The cause and effect relations are so diffuse, and the meaning of the moral terms we use are so deferring in character that we need the advice of the French philosophers to see us through. We have to acknowledge the fact that in our constructing of moral "goods" we always run the risk of creating closed-off structures of meaning, metanarratives if you will, that because of changing circumstances and power relations come to exclude the interest of some and protect the interest of others. How do we guard against this reification of morality, especially in the context of business organizations and other institutions?

We need some of the suspicions of Heidegger, Derrida and Levinas to keep us aware of the fact that human beings tend to close themselves off to realities that make them feel insecure, at risk or unstable. We have to accept the deferring character of our moral language and see it as a strength, rather than a weakness, allowing us to keep in touch will those notions that constitutes a meaningful life. We have to allow the Other, those that often seem strange and make us uncomfortable, to appeal to us, to address us, even to oblige us. In this way we keep from closing our sense of the "good" off from the interests

of others, who may be affected, directly or indirectly, by how we think or act. The way in which we affect others and the way in which our actions today affect our future and those of future generations, may seem too distant and abstract for us to conceive of. However, this is precisely where we have to allow for our subjective interest to be transcended by something "other" than ourselves. Sometimes we may find the "other" within ourselves if we allow it to address us, sometimes we will have to allow ourselves to be open to others that may address us from unknown quarters.

Keeping our awareness of the metaphorical character of our moral terms in mind, we have to acknowledge the fact that this openness is not easily achieved, and that the process of reifying our moral notions is in fact very natural and almost inevitable since it involves our sense of well being. Yet some of the gravest immoral ideologies, practices and legitimations have been the result of precisely this process. How do we guard against it? One characteristic of this process is the way in which the individual and the particular is subsumed and ignored within some grand narrative of ideology or institutional policy. What we therefore need is to guarantee in some way the existence of individual voices, of difference, of alterity, within our organizations and institutions. We have to encourage and protect difference and dissensus, instead of seeing it as a threat. If we come to see it as a threat, we will unconsciously eradicate it from our notion of the "good", and this "good" will in fact ironically become inhuman and immoral in character. To protect both the individual and the other, while at the same time trying to accomplish communal, organizational or institutional goals is no easy task. Yet it is in this process that our insights from the natural sciences come in handy.

It is in fact, biologically and scientifically necessary to allow for the complex interactions of various parts and elements within structures that do not always form seamless coherent wholes, react predictably and operate according to set rules. In fact, the operations of the virtual world, into which each of us are drawn on a daily basis, operate exactly in this seemingly "chaotic" way. One can describe this union of personal and collective goals as a non-totalizing structure that function as a whole (Taylor 1997:329). Networks and webs are not controlled by principles that are either integrative or disjunctive but are regulated by

rules displaying the strange logic of neither/ nor. These webs or networks are neither hegemonic nor fragmenting though undeniably haunted by tendencies in these contradictory directions. These non-totalizing structures that nevertheless act as whole are allelomorphs. Taylor (1997:330) explains the meaning of allelomorphs as " any group of possible mutational forms of a gene". Genes are data-structures, but are yet not completely prescribed. This idea also extends to cultural networks within which it is inscribed. Bodies are prostheses of machines as machines are prostheses of bodies. "Morphing" is the perpetual condition that keeps all in flux. Instead of holding on to Kant's transcendental "Ding-an Sich", we must rather acknowledge that we are part of an immanent web of relations, a multiplicity of relationships, properties and activities. It is in and through this immanent web of relations that everything arises and passes away (Taylor 1997:291).

In order to understand this immanent web of relations, one has to acknowledge where we all come from, and in acknowledging our particular and specific histories, value-systems and interests, we must negotiate common ground with others as we go along, which will in turn change the web and reconstitute and reinvent the self. In this way the individual and the group live together in a flux where subjectivity and objectivity dissolves in a constant renegotiation of positions. This dissertation aims at providing some suggestions at to how we as individuals entering the 21st century can work, play, and make decisions together whilst at the same time avoiding ideology and systemic injustice. In order to do this, we have to understand the conditions by which and despite which we live in this world that in a very real sense has become a "global village".

For this to happen, virtual spaces must be created where people interact around certain issues long before the virtual meeting or set of e-mail correspondence that will determine the final decision takes place. This discursive space should allow individuals to share personal values, background information, and emotions with the group if they so wish. The goal of this inclusive conversation is to soften and expand the fast-paced "rational" and abrupt character of e-mail to include other aspects and facets of communication. These discursive spaces must allow more than just logocentric interaction, by allowing employees to post photographs, graphic images, symbols, comic strips, and video- and film excerpts

that infuse the discourse with images that enrich moral discourse. Instead of restricting conversation to one-liner e-mails, narratives around where the company comes from and why it was originally established, tales of moral heroes who set exemplary examples, and even events that the company is ashamed of, can be posted. In this way the organization is creating a sense of history and context within which employees should make their moral decisions.

The reason why this sense of community history and context is so important has been explained by Alasdair MacIntyre in his book *After Virtue* (1985). He indicated that in most cases modern day individuals are expected to make moral decisions without having access to a moral vocabulary with substantive content. MacIntyre calls these individuals "ghostly selves" who uses a moral vocabulary that is fragmented and lacks any community context to fill it with content. Some of the principles that are often referred to within a working environment have never been discussed in terms of what it really means within the context of the work that the organization does, the organizational structure, or the interests of people that work there. Abstract principles have no use if they are not defined, redefined and renegotiated in terms of the organizational goals and purposes, the employees' personal goals and their reasons for associating with the organization, and the interests of all the other stakeholders involved with the organization. This is also not a once-off process, these webs of meaning changes as the organization grows, as its external context changes and external pressures increases or decreases, and as the composition of the workforce changes. These changes impact on how principles or values are understood and these changes should be acknowledged in an ongoing moral discourse. In this way, Cyberspace becomes the virtual reality within which the organization constantly reinvents itself by means of the diverse inputs and expertise of all involved. It is also the context in and through which their employees are actively engaged in the process of development and growth. This process creates a community within which mutual trust, responsibility and discretion are acknowledged, constantly reaffirmed, and practiced.

Taylor (1997:326) provides us with a number of rules which define the contours of non-totalizing structures when they function as a whole. Certain of these rules are especially

valuable in understanding and structuring the context of moral discourse on the Web. I will rephrase and apply some of these insights to electronic moral discourse and indicate the value that it may have for business organizations.

- **Rule of association:** *"Getting to the way we do things around here"*

Non-totalizing structures are no longer all encompassing, they tend to be flexible, never permanent or fixed. In the current business environment one tends to find an increase in volatility, innovation, and mobility. Individuals tend to associate with an organization while it suits the individual's goals and preferences, and would move on if this was no longer the case. The result of it is an ever-changing workforce, and a constant re-evaluation of what constitutes a good worker and a good organization is therefore necessary. Whereas job stability was considered a virtue in the past, now variety of experience, international exposure and interdisciplinary background are seen as recommendations. In the past, organizations would have a much more permanent, all-encompassing identity and structure and therefore also determined the individual's career and lifestyle. Currently it seems as if it is up to the individual to associate in terms of his/her own perceptions of identity. It is important that the moral discourse within the organization addresses these changes, and allows the individual to express his/ her conception of the good. This individual perspective should be brought into dialogue with the organizational history, culture, practices and the collective definition of the good as it has evolved over time. The individual should have the opportunity to express dissent, ask questions, and interact with others within the organization to ensure that he/ she feels comfortable with the way in which the company conducts its business. The company should in turn be open for innovative suggestions on how to strengthen, enrich or adapt its practices. It should value the diversity of perspectives operative in the work place and attempt to integrate them in such a way that enriches the company culture.

- **Rule of distribution:** *"A chain is as strong as its weakest link"*

These structures tend to function bottom-up rather than top-down, they are characterized by parallel rather than serial structures, and there is no centralized power structure. Instead of being hierarchical and consolidated, they tend to be lateral and dispersed. The

increased emphasis on empowerment and participation in decision-making, has distributed power to complex networks of power relations that are much harder to manage, because it lacks linear structures. Because of this characteristic of non-totalizing systems, moral discourse in Cyberspace makes a lot of sense. Not only does it allow all to participate and eliminate hierarchies, but it can also ensure anonymity for those who prefer it that way. This does not mean, however, that all forms of identifications and cultural, gender and religious characteristics should be eliminated. In fact, in some cases these details will provide the much-needed context for understanding each other's perspectives and should be encouraged in certain circumstances. The choice to disclose personal information must however always reside with the individual. The added benefit to the development of moral skills on the web is that it allows the organization to manage its employees by the building of mutual responsibility and trust, instead of excessive controls and monitoring.

- **Rule of allelomimesis:** *"Unity and stability without sacrificing individuality and change"*

These structures coordinate without necessarily unifying, they allow proximity, yet maintain a critical distance. Moral discourse on the web has the effect of ensuring participation in the collective discourse on values, thereby eliminating the dangers of fragmentation and the maximizing of self-interest that have become real dangers in the virtual world. This form of moral discourse values different perspectives yet relates them to the organizational culture, its goals and sense of purpose, thereby creating some sense of unity and stability within the flux. It cannot force consensus, but it can give employees the skills to think moral issues through and provide them with various guidelines on how similar problems have been dealt with in the past, and how the relevant values are understood within the organization.

- **Rule of non-linearity:** *"Staying in touch with reality"*

Non-totalizing structures consist of complex non-linear structures that integrate feedback loops and create an extreme sensitivity, yet it is not a circularity that is self-reflexive or self-referential. The web is the ideal place to engage both internal and external

stakeholders into discussions about values and organizational practices. This develops a context-sensitive organization that takes the opinions of various stakeholders seriously.

- **Rule of aleatory:** *"Unpredictability leads to innovation if there is trust""*

Networks are riddled with gaps and therefore leave room for the unexpected. Control is always insecure and knowledge is uncertain. This lack of predictability is definitely a characteristic of the current workplace. We have looked into the possibility of dealing with these risks and unpredictabilities by increased monitoring, supervision and control. Not only do these practices undermine human dignity and freedom, it also becomes counterproductive because it creates an environment of mistrust, suspicion and maximized self-interest. People who feel mistrusted and slighted will find their own ways of beating the system and seeking out the loopholes. People who are trusted are empowered to be innovative and responsible.

- **Rule of volatility:** *"Complexity stimulates creativity, not fear"*

Non-totalizing structures foster disaster as well as novelty. The speed with which these networks operate causes a decrease in stability and therefore becomes more complex. Many changes occur simultaneously and should be managed in conjunction with each other. Because the interaction between these changes cannot be predicted it causes anxiety. This anxiety can arrest the positive process of creativity and novelty and should therefore be addressed. The best way to address these challenges is to create an environment of trust that fosters innovation and creativity as was indicated earlier in this paper. People as moral agents should not be seen as liabilities in times of change, but rather as the organization's most important assets.

- **Rule of vulnerability:** *"Networks increase mutual responsibility"*

Vulnerability is the function of interrelation or connectivity. The recognition that the system can run wild can provoke a siege of control through tactics of surveillance, administration or management. Furthermore, an awareness of the fragility of networks creates prospects of subversive or even terrorist activity. Yet the vulnerability of the interconnected world is also the space within which people come to recognize their

responsibilities towards each other and the company and the importance of their personal discretion. This can be used as an opportunity for both personal and organizational growth.

- **Rule of contestation:** *"Disagreement can stimulate mutual understanding"*

Contestation can sometimes turn violent, because increasing connections do not always enhance harmony. It increases conflicts, disputes and renegotiations. This characteristic is probably the most definite indication that organizations are going through certain dramatic and intense changes. Conflict and disagreement need not always have destructive consequences for the organization. If the disagreement is dealt with through dialogue and interaction, it can become a valuable resource in creating increased understanding, respect and tolerance. This process can however only succeed if management leads by example and deals with dissent in a positive, productive way that makes all feel their contributions are valued, without sacrificing the goals and values of the organization. It is a balancing act that is difficult to sustain, but which in the end fosters mutual trust and cooperation.

4.6. Conclusion:

The stated goal of this study is to develop an ethical framework that is able to both accommodate individual moral differences, and maintain unity and cooperation. The insights developed in this chapter could inform the development of such a framework. Before we pursue this goal in Chapter 5, let us briefly review those aspects that are most relevant and important to the development of a framework for dealing with moral values in pluralistic working environments.

4.6.1. Embodied morality rather than transcendental principles:

A holistic approach to understanding the way in which individuals make moral decisions in the workplace is supported by the views of Merleau-Ponty, Lakoff and Johnsson, as well as that of William Frederick. All these writers emphasize the importance of the fact that one's world view and the beliefs and values that inform it, is more often than not the result of one's daily struggle for survival, for acceptance and for the best possible way of going

about one's life task. Allowing all the aspects of a person's world view to infuse the moral decisions he or she makes at work, enables the various beliefs and values that this person has selected from a variety of sources (be they religious, cultural, philosophical or scientific) to provide guidance in terms of the best possible course of action. If one acknowledges that the days are over when most ethical dilemmas in the workplace could be anticipated and addressed by clear-cut rules, one has to reinforce the individual's resources when he or she has only his or her discretion and moral reasoning skills to count on.

It has become clear that most of the philosophic approaches to business ethics succumb to the temptation to provide universal, timeless and context-less principles that should then be applied to moral dilemmas in the workplace. This approach to business ethics gives philosophers a bad name, since it places us in an ivory tower of abstract ideas that provides little practical guidance for real life moral issues in the workplace. Some attempts at marrying universal principles with contextual realities have been made, such as the ISCT-theory discussed in chapter 3. Frederick (1995:272) praises the ISCT for retaining part of the moral relativism that is consistent with observable socio-cultural behavior, while giving full reign to the transculturally-legitimated conventional principles of applied philosophy. As he puts it *"Voila! Nature-based socio-culturally elaborated human experience is married to philosophy's most cherished principles."* He does however also acknowledge the fact that ISCT suffers analytic imperfections, as was indicated in Chapter 3. ISCT can't get away from the fact that even the hypernorms they speak of is subject to contextual interpretation and therefore to relativity. He also criticizes ISCT for displaying the remnants of positivism's now declining heritage, namely value-free intellectual deliberation. Donaldson and Dunfee deny explicitly that economic behavior has any roots in nature-based processes. Frederick (1995:272) argues that the "naturalness" of economic behavior underlies many of the "commonsense moral conviction and preferences" of people in business.

4.6.2. Complex systems and networks of relations

The relatedness and intersubjectivity that determines the creation for knowledge and truth need not lead to relativism. In fact, complex systems have their own built-in safety valves preventing the systems from self-destructing. We may however want to make sure that these safety valves are reinforced by strong moral values, so that the glue that holds the system together is indeed the values that are shared by all belonging to the system. Calas & Smircich's (1999:663) analysis of recent developments in postmodern organizations indicates the similarities between actor-network theory (ANT) and Foucault's notion of power/ knowledge as power relations. The idea of individuals being involved in networks which are conceived as a very dispersed and very decentered chain of ongoing and mutant activities destabilizes the idea of the isolated rational decision-maker in the workplace. Rather, networks include social, technical and natural actors. All elements of the network are actors, since they are capable of acting on one another. ATN highlights at least two issues, the actor and the network are not just things out there that can be objectively apprehended and described by the researcher. Rather, actor-network is in itself a conceptual frame - a way of understanding social and technical processes. In the second place, thinking about networks requires conceiving of relationships among things in particular ways. Networks are constituted by scripts and need to be translated if its moves are to be understood. The irreducibility and relational character of networks make the search for essences and facts obsolete (Calas & Smircich 1999:664).

In the context of the current reconfiguration of time and space of organizations, it becomes essential to be able to find moral guidelines within the networks of relations that permeates reality. The "Web" or virtuality, has become part of everyday working life, and our interaction with the machine begins to define our life experiences. In order to be able to navigate one's way through these networks, one needs to acknowledge the interconnectedness of relations within the workplace and be aware of the unexpected and unpredictable ways in which these relations may play out. The idea of networks within the workplace can however play a very important role in the unity and integrity of the organization. It can bind employees and other stakeholders to the organization in such a way

that it facilitates cooperation, loyalty and trust without attempting to create a permanent structure that might suffocate change and adaptability.

4.6.3. Relational character of truth statements and the importance of deconstructing time-less truths

Rorty (1993:21) argues that the Western philosophical tradition has been seduced into believing that its role is to function as "the mirror of nature". This metaphor led to the view that philosophers are those who investigate the structure of the mind and the conditions of knowledge. Variations of this metaphor, as well as (unsuccessful) attempts to escape it, can be found in "transcendental philosophy", from Kant to Apel, the rational psychology" from Descartes to Fodor and "naturalized epistemology" from Hume to Quine. Rorty (1993:56) argues that pragmatism has led us to a post-philosophic position in which there is no particular portion of culture setting the standard for what constitutes truth or knowledge. In fact, all participate in setting the criteria, and all criteria become temporary resting places constructed by a community to facilitate its queries (Rorty 1993:60).

The correspondence theory of truth and the judgment of the rational subject have been criticized in both 20th century continental philosophy and the American pragmatist tradition. Not only do many contemporary philosophers agree that our human attempts to grasp truth are no longer picture-perfect accounts of reality, there is also a measure of agreement on why this is the case. Rorty (1993:34) selects the following quotes to indicate the consensus between American pragmatists and Continental philosophers on the ubiquity of language (my selection of longer quotations):

"Man makes the thought, and the word mean nothing which the man has not made it mean, and that only to some other man" (Pierce)

"Pierce goes very far in the direction that I have called the deconstruction of the transcendental signified, which, at one time or another, would place a reassuring end to the reference from sign to sign" (Derrida)

"... all awareness even of particulars - is a linguistic affair" (Sellars)

"It is only in language that one can mean something by something" (Wittgenstein)

"Human experience is essentially linguistic" (Gadamer)

".... man is in the process of perishing as the being of language continues to shine even brighter on the horizon" (Foucault)

" Speaking about language turns language almost inevitably into an object and then its reality vanishes" (Heidegger)

Both the American pragmatist tradition and the Continental tradition of post-humanism, post-structuralism and (later) postmodernism have been accused of nihilism, and the destruction of Philosophy in its essence. Yet, the post-philosophical, or rather anti-metaphysical tradition of philosophy has important contributions to make in terms of man's search for truth and meaning. Frederick (1995:274) indicates how three of the most important writers in the field of business ethics invoke the ghost of John Dewey, the instrumental pragmatist who long advocated that values and valuational processes stem from the realm of human experience lived in human communities. Edward Freeman, the father of the stakeholder theory in business ethics, acknowledges the fact that one cannot divorce the idea of a moral community or a moral discourse from the ideas of the value-creation activity of business. Donaldson and Dunfee's theories about the links between micro-contracts and macro-contracts also acknowledge the fact that moral principles bubble up from human experience. Pragmatism wants to acknowledge the fact that all our truth claims are embedded in our experiences and relations with each other within the natural world. The possibilities opened by the tradition of pragmatism is explained well by West (1989:209): *"The goal of sophisticated neopragmatism is to think genealogically about specific practices in the light of the best available social theories, cultural critiques, and historiographical insights and to act politically to achieve certain moral consequences in the light of effective strategies and tactics."*

Another product of the pragmatist's labors is that it invalidated the widely held distinction between the "soft" human sciences and the "hard" natural sciences. The basic difference is not that the human sciences are self-defining (or self-reflexive) and the natural sciences are context-free (or repeatable). The difference rather lies in the relative stability of normal vocabularies in the natural sciences as opposed to the relative instability of those in

the human sciences. Furthermore, the irreducibility of one vocabulary to another is not indicative of an ontological difference or methodological distinction, but reveals a functional difference, i.e. different human aims of prediction and meaning endowment (West 1989:203). Rosenthal & Buchholz (2000:404) attempt to revisit the relationship between normative and empirical business ethics in view of the fact that pragmatism, with its emphasis on broad empiricism and ontological emergence, allows both facts and values to emerge as wedded dimensions of complex contexts that cannot be dissected into atomic bits. The question as to what constitutes truth has been redefined by recognizing that the value qualities that emerge from contextual contingencies are as real as all other qualities in nature. Rosenthal & Buchholz (2000:405) explains: *"Normative claims are rooted in a sense of concrete human existence and immediately had value qualities included therein."*

4.6.4. The narrative structure of moral metaphors

Metaphoric language impacts on the way in which we relate to and describe reality. This can be illustrated by referring to various examples from a variety of disciplines. One well-known example is Derrida's (1982:218) reminder that even the most natural, most universal, most real, most luminous thing, the apparently most exterior referent, the sun, does not completely escape the general law of metaphoric value as soon as it intervenes (as it always does) in the process of axiological and semantic value. Not even the value of the signifier "sun" can be fixed without considering its surroundings, so much so that in some languages it is impossible to "sit in the sun". The value of any term is therefore always determined by its environment.

Derrida's explanation of "justice" illustrates the narrative structure of moral values. In Derrida's view, one should address oneself to the singularity of the other, and to oneself, as another, within a performative situation, in order to speak justice. An assertion of general justice - "this or that is just", almost inevitably ends up being unjust. Justice is therefore characterized by an attendance to singularities. It is always situational, circumstantial, and actual (Letiche 1998:124).

It is also important to note that this chapter indicated that it is impossible to pinpoint the meaning of our moral metaphors without taking into consideration that the meaning of the metaphor that we are using defers constantly. This is the case because of a variety of second-order metaphors that we use in structuring the meaning of the first-level metaphor. Instead of pretending that our moral metaphors generate stable, fixed meaning, Alvesson (1993: 131) argues that we have to contend with the ambiguous and slippery play of metaphors on various levels. This is especially important when we use moral metaphors, since it could assist us in allowing organizations to fill their values with new content by exposing it to other meanings. This could be done by changing or reinterpreting the second order metaphors. In this way, organizations can prevent values from stagnating or becoming irrelevant, yet allow an organization to have some continuity in terms of keeping certain first-order metaphors.

This chapter provides us with insights that will forever change the way we think about moral values. It argued against transcendental principles and made us acknowledge the embodied character of our moral values. Furthermore, the connectedness of our webs of meaning brings us to a relational understanding of truth, which makes the temporary, ever deferring character of moral truths inevitable. Finally, moral values can and should never operate in an isolated, contextless sphere. The narrative structure of moral values, and the role that Others, and groups of Others play in the process of value-creation, should never be ignored.